

# Title Page

Thesis title: McKinsey reasoning & cognitive predicate assumptions

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Submitted for assessment for the PhD degree.

I, Ross Gareth FORD confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## Abstract

I defend the view that McKinsey reasoning is concerned with the following three claims:

- (i) If a subject's mental state is individuated by a given property, then she can know a priori that she has a thought that has that property.
- (ii) Many *de dicto structured* cognitive predicates express properties that logically imply the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the subject.
- (iii) Every *de dicto structured* cognitive predicate expresses a property which individuates the cognitive state described.

Specifically, claims (i)-(iii) and a non-inferential principle governing the extent of our a priori knowledge capacities imply that a subject can know a priori that contingent objects external to her exist. Cartesian reflections, semantic evidence adduced by Kripke and the Fregean view that cognitive verbs express mental relations between persons and propositions support claims (i)-(iii) respectively. McKinsey reasoning is, thus, seemingly paradoxical.

The dominant response is to evade or reformulate McKinsey reasoning (Brueckner, Boghossian, Davies, Wright, Brown). I argue that such responses *tacitly* assume claim (iii), which encourages the replacing of claims (i)-(ii) with alternative claims involving inferential knowledge principles and subjects' having a priori knowledge of thought content which is externally determined; this package, on my view, is defective. I rebut suggestions that McKinsey reasoning is undermined by arguments for the claim it is not absurd to possess the capacity to know a priori that contingent external objects exist (Sawyer, Brewer), since they are directed at the reformulated reasoning only.

I defend the view that there is sufficient evidence to both reject claim (iii) and replace it with an alternative claim concerning linguistic, not propositional, meaning. My view dissolves the issue of whether a priori access to one's thought contents is achievable, if such contents are externally determined (Burge, Flavel & Owens). It also provides a novel response to a recent problem about our capacity to know our thought contents (Kallestrup & Pritchard).

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# Terminology

Quotations are indicated by dual quotation marks and single line spacing. For example,

“Oscar can simply deduce E, using only premisses that are knowable a priori, including the premiss that he is thinking that water is wet. Since Oscar can deduce E from premisses that are knowable a priori, Oscar can know E itself a priori.” (1991a, p15).

Sentences are indicated by single quotation marks. For example, ‘George is five feet tall’.

Sentence variables are denoted by the dollar sign \$. For example, consider the cognitive predicate, ‘S thinks that \$’.

The lowercase letter t is used as a variable for terms.

Labels for terminology, names of principles labels and the like are indicated by italics with abbreviations of the label in brackets. For example, *The Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*.

Proposition variables are denoted by lowercase italicised alphabetical letters. For example, the proposition that *p*.

Propositions are denoted by *italicised words*, and preceded by the clause “the proposition that”. For example, the proposition that *Laura thinks that Gödel is cute* logically implies the proposition that *Gödel exists*.

Symbols for property variables are denoted by uppercase and bold type alphabetical letters. For example, the properties **F** and **G**.

Properties are denoted by bold type. For example, on some views the sentence ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’, expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***.

Mental state variables are denoted by a curly bold-face letter  $m$ . For example, Laura possesses mental state  $m$ . For example, Laura's mental state  $m$  is subjectively indistinguishable from the mental state  $m^*$ .

Sometimes when I wish to be especially clear that I am concerned with an object I may underline it. For example, the contingently existing physical object - the man - Gödel.

S is used as a variable for a subject.

Formulations of principles and claims, especially when they are first introduced, are written up using **ten point Ariel type** and are preceded by a label which is written using *italicised twelve point Garamond type*. For example,

*Propositional Theory of Individuation (PTI)*

All cognitive attitudes and states are individuated by their propositional contents.

Arguments, outlines of arguments, outlines of reasoning are written up using **ten point Ariel type** and are preceded by a label which is written using *italicised twelve point Garamond type*.

Each claim of the argument is given a reference label on the left hand side in (curly brackets). The status of the claim is abbreviated in [square brackets] on its right hand side. The spacing between the claims is single spacing, rather than the usual one and a half line spacing. For example,

*Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

(STMR0) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' is true [assumption].

(STMR1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute** [From SE and STMR0]

(STMR2) The proposition that *Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists* [from SE, STMR1 and STMR0].

(STMR3) The property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute** individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From CPA, STMR1 and STMR0]

(STMR4) Laura can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute** [From PAI, STMR3].

Therefore,

(STMR5) Laura can know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from STMR2 and STMR4 and certain auxiliary claims to be described]

But,

(STMR6) Laura cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [the consequence of an auxiliary claim to be described]

Therefore,

(STMR7) Laura both can and cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from STMR5 and STMR6]



# Introduction

In Chapter 1, I set up an argument which I call *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* which is concerned with the following three theses:

## *Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}$ , which is individuated by property **F**, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses **F**.

## *Semantic Externalism (SE)*

Many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide (in the sense of logically implying the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the thinker).

## *Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*

Every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the mental state it describes.

The Cartesian predicament supports *PAI*. Semantic evidence adduced by Kripke (1972), Kaplan (1979) and others (for example, McKinsey 1987) supports *SE*. Frege (1892) and Russell's (1912) work supports *CPA*. Roughly, S knows that p strongly a priori iff could possess such knowledge in a solipsistic world. Consequently, S's strong a priori knowledge that p does not depend on any empirical assumptions.

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* aims to show that the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* are incompatible. Specifically, it aims to show that assuming the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* results in an absurd conclusion. In order to be successful, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, requires instances of the following two auxiliary claims to be true:

## *Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject S and any propositions p and q: If S can know a priori that p and the proposition that p logically implies the proposition that q, then S can know a priori that q.

## *Environmental Access*

For any subject, S, and any proposition that e, where e asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, S cannot know strongly a priori that e.

Chapter 2 deals with some preliminary thought experiments which I commonly refer to throughout the thesis. These are the famous thought experiments of Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979) and related thought experiments used by Flavay & Owens (1994) and Boghossian (1987 and 1997).

In Chapter 3, I sharply distinguish *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* from another argument which is commonly labelled “McKinsey Reasoning”. I call this other argument the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*. *The Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* appears to be concerned with the following claims:

#### *W-PAC*

For any subject , S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If S is thinking that p, then S can know weakly a priori that she thinks that p.

#### *S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a thought that p, then S’s thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject’s internal physical state.

#### *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p** and such properties fail to weakly supervene upon a subject’s internal physical state, and any proposition that e which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects: S can know “a priori” that if she thinks that p then e.

#### *Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject , S, and any proposition that e, where e asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, S cannot know weakly a priori that e.

#### *A priori deduction principle*

{If S can know weakly a priori that p and S can know a priori that (if p, then q) and S can simultaneously believe both that p and that (if p, then q) and S can competently deduce q from this simultaneous belief}, then S can know weakly a priori that q.

Where S knows that p *weakly a priori* iff S acquires his knowledge without using empirical investigation as a justificatory basis but may make empirical assumptions.

There are many differences between the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, which I list in Chapter 3. One main difference between them is that the latter *explicitly states CPA*, whereas the former *tacitly assumes CPA*. Another main difference between the two types of reasoning is that, at first glance, the philosophical basis of the claims which are the concern of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* are unclear. Whereas, the philosophical basis of each of the claims of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* (*PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*) are clear and have been briefly mentioned above. In Chapter 3, I suggest that a number of commentators on “McKinsey Reasoning” fail to sharply distinguish between *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* in the way I do.

My aim in the thesis is to defend *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Specifically, in Chapters 4 and 5, I defend its auxiliary claims. Also in these chapters I discuss the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis and the inferential principle *A priori deduction principle*, which are the concern of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*; I conclude the latter claim may be plausible but the former is inconclusive. However, even if I’m wrong in my discussion of the claims that are of the concern of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*, my defence of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* will not be affected, since the arguments are so very different and concerned with distinct claims.

Given that I defend *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I am left with a problem. On the one hand, each of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* are entrenched theses in philosophy but, on the other hand, the conjunction of these theses is incompatible. So how do I resolve this problem? I endorse McKinsey’s way out of the dilemma. Specifically, in Chapters 6 and 7 I defend the *PAI* and *SE* theses. In Chapter 8, I tentatively endorse McKinsey’s rejection of *CPA*. In Chapter 9, I outline McKinsey’s positive picture of how we have private and internal logically narrow thoughts about public and external ordinary contingently existing contingent objects and natural kinds. In Chapter 10, I show how the overall package I endorse dissolves the “Achievement Problem” for privileged access. The “Achievement Problem” says, roughly, that since the contents of a subject’s mental states depend on ordinary contingently existing physical objects and kinds, we cannot have “a priori” knowledge that we possess such mental states. In Chapter 10, I also suggest that the package I endorse provides an illuminating way of looking at another recent problem for knowledge of our thoughts posed by Kallestrup & Pritchard (2004).

Additionally, in Chapters 6 and 7 I examine elements of the claims *W-PAC* and *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*. I suggest that they may be

explained by their proponent's making the tacit assumption of *CPA*. I also suggest that the claims are dubious. However, once again, I stress that even if I'm wrong on these matters, it won't affect my defence of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* because this reasoning is so very different from the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*.

# Chapter 1

In this chapter I shall detail my understanding of “McKinsey Reasoning” which I call *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. My understanding of “McKinsey Reasoning” differs quite radically from the presentations of the reasoning by other commentators (see, for example Kallestrup (2011), Wright (2000), (Davies (1998, 2000), Brown (2004), Farkas (2008)). However, I shall marshal sufficient textual evidence from broad sweep of McKinsey’s work to support my understanding of “McKinsey Reasoning”. Moreover, I think this textual evidence will show that some others who have commentated on “McKinsey Reasoning” have grossly misunderstood the reasoning in a number of ways. Explaining these commentators’ misunderstandings is not the task of this chapter. My aim in this chapter is to explain *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I shall outline the form of argument it uses, suggest that it is prima facie plausible and, thus, suggest that we have prima facie justification that it presents a paradox.

A full blown defence of each and every claim or principle utilised by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is not the aim of this chapter. However, I do wish to outline these claims and make them at least prima facie plausible. In later chapters of the thesis, however, I shall defend these claims or principles from the strongest attacks that I can locate. Thus, by the end of those chapters, I conclude that we have good reason to think that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* presents us with a genuine paradox. I then spend later parts of the thesis outlining a sketch of how we resolve that paradox.

I shall suggest that there is prima facie support in the history of philosophy for the following three claims:

## *Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}$ , which is individuated by property F, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses F.

## *Semantic Externalism (SE)*

Many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide (in the sense of logically implying the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the thinker).

### *Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*

Every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the mental state it describes.

Certain interpretations of the Cartesian predicament support *PAI*. Semantic evidence adduced by Kripke, Kaplan and, perhaps, others supports *SE*. *CPA* has been an entrenched view in philosophy and may originate from the works of Frege (1892) and Russell (1912).

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* aims to show that the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* are incompatible. Thus, if successful, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, forces us to give up *at least one* of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*. Indeed, if we are persuaded by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, we may be forced to give up *more than one* of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*.

How does *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* work? Specifically, what is the form of argument it uses? I shall argue that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* must utilise *instances of* the following two principles:

### *Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

### *Environmental Access*

For any subject, *S*, and any proposition that *e*, where *e* asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, *S* cannot know strongly a priori that *e*.

In this chapter, I shall be suggesting that the relevant instances of each of these principles is *prima facie* plausible and will be fully defending them in later chapters of this thesis.

The basic idea of the reasoning is to take a de dicto structured cognitive predicate which satisfies each of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI* and show how, together with an instance of meta-closure principle *CA*, it produces a claim which is contrary to the *Environmental Access* thesis. Since, instances of meta-closure principle *CA* and the *Environmental Access* thesis are true, or so I shall argue, we are forced to conclude that *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* are jointly incompatible.

Thus, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* presents us with a paradox: On the one hand, each of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* enjoy entrenched support from various parts of the history of philosophy. On the other hand, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, shows us that we cannot jointly assume the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*.

If you were persuaded that *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* were jointly incompatible which one would you give up? Or would you give up more than one of them? McKinsey's answer to this question is to give up *CPA alone*. Specifically, McKinsey's position is that the evidence in favour of *SE* is overwhelming and certain interpretations of the Cartesian predicament that support *PAI* are correct. Thus, McKinsey *singles out CPA* for rejection. McKinsey is, thus, forced to explain why the support for *CPA*, which may be derived from the work of Frege (1892) and Russell (1912), is inadequate. In later chapters of this thesis, I shall be sketching this response of McKinsey's and tentatively endorsing it.

It is possible to respond to the last few questions of mine in the following way: "I'm not persuaded that *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* are jointly incompatible, so I do not have to explain which one of these theses is false." This response, in effect, commits one to claiming that there is a flaw in the mode of reasoning utilised by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. The thought behind such a response is that at least one of the relevant instances of meta-closure principle *CA* and the *Environmental Access* thesis are false. I shall be arguing against such a response when I defend the relevant instances of *CA* and *Environmental Access* from attacks later on in the thesis.

One final thing to emphasise are the three paradox building stages or levels I am going to go through when I set up *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I am not suggesting these stages or levels are the typical way one might initially create (or roughly think of) a paradox but they do make sound presentational sense. In particular, satisfying each of these stages ensures that some of the important tasks and challenges one faces when presenting a paradox are adequately completed.

The first stage or level is the *philosophical basis stage*. The philosophical basis stage involves adducing evidence whether it is semantic evidence, armchair theorising or support from the history of philosophy in favour of the truth of a certain claim. The *philosophical basis stage* also sharply sets out and describes the claims in question and, perhaps, distinguishes these claims from other similar or related claims in an attempt to avert any potential misunderstandings.

The second stage or level is the *target-identification stage*. The target identification stage takes the claims identified in the philosophical basis stage and states an aim or goal one has towards these claims. It might be to show that a disjunction of the claims is incompatible or it might be to show that a conjunction of the claims are jointly incompatible and so on.

The third and final stage of paradox building is what I shall call the *mechanical stage*. In this stage the mode of reasoning used to achieve the target identified in the second stage is set out. Any auxiliary claims required by the mode of reasoning are described and defended at this stage.

When one undertakes paradox building, perhaps, the various stages sometimes take place together or some sort of a reflective equilibrium between the various stages takes place.

However, each of the three stages must be completed for us to present a seeming paradox. In order to see this, imagine if one of the stages did not take place. Imagine, for example, that one completed the second and third stages but not the first. Specifically, imagine that one had a sound argument to show that a conjunction of certain claims is incompatible but provided no philosophical basis or evidence for each of the claims. What would be the point of doing this? Why should we care if certain claims are jointly incompatible if we have been given no evidence for accepting them in the first place? In this example, labouring away with hard, detailed and time-consuming work at completing the third and second stages may be pointless, unless one also successfully completes the first stage.

Similarly, for example, one cannot build a paradox by simply labouring away at the first and second stages and hope to have achieved one's goal, unless one also completes the third stage by producing a sound argument which achieves that goal.

In this chapter I want to emphasise that I am attempting to fully complete the first two stages: In §1-5, I shall be explaining the philosophical basis for accepting *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*, thus completing the *philosophical basis stage*. I have repeatedly stated that my aim is to show that the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* are incompatible, thus completing the *target-identification stage*. In §6-8 I shall explain *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* using examples involving particular de dicto structured cognitive predicates and suggest that it is prima facie reasonable to accept the instances of the meta-closure principle *CA* and *Environmental Access* thesis used by the reasoning. Thus, by the end of §8, I have only *partially* completed



the *mechanical stage* of showing how *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* constitutes a paradox. I have not completely shown the reasoning to be a paradox because I have not defended the instances of the meta-closure principle *CA* and the *Environmental Access* thesis against literature which might be thought to refute such principles; I shall complete this task in later chapters of the thesis. In §9 I summarise the state of play so far and show how circumstances can be such that one is free to reject one of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE*. In §11-13, I outline some variations of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I suggest that while these presentations are technically sound – or, in my terminology, sound at *the mechanical level* – they have certain presentational defects. Specifically, the presentational defect it has is that it never makes clear that *CPA* is a suspect for rejection and, thus, it makes it very difficult for a lay reader of the argument to finger *CPA* alone as the culprit responsible for the paradox. In §14 I outline the plan for the rest of the thesis.

## §1 Preliminaries

First, take a simple non-cognitive sentence ‘George is cute’, say. Now turn that into a cognitive sentence, ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’, for example. Note that the cognitive sentence contains no element concerning the existence of Laura or George. For example, the cognitive sentence contains no element like this: ‘George exists’ or ‘Laura exists’ or ‘George and Laura both exist’. For example, ‘George exists’ is an *existence predicate* whereas ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ is a *cognitive predicate*.

Note that the scope of the cognitive predicate is structurally de dicto. That is to say, the cognitive predicate is logically and grammatically de dicto in the sense that the scope of the term ‘George’ - the (small scope) proper name ‘George’ – falls logically and grammatically within the scope of the cognitive operator ‘thinks’.

Consider another few examples. The cognitive predicate ‘Bob thinks that that pub is good’ can be read in a structurally de dicto manner when the term ‘that pub’ has small scope relative to the cognitive operator ‘thinks’. The cognitive predicate ‘Segei believes that you are rich’ can be read structurally de dicto when the term ‘you’ has small scope and the cognitive operator ‘believes’ has the larger scope. The cognitive predicate ‘Sergei believes that I am rich’ can be read structurally de dicto when the term ‘I’ has small scope relative to the operator ‘believes’. Similarly then cognitive predicate ‘Sergei wishes that he is rich’ can

be read as structurally de dicto when the term ‘he’ has small scope relative to the operator ‘wishes’.

Now consider the sentence ‘Rome burns and Laura thinks that George is cute’, when I (or McKinsey) speak of de dicto structured cognitive predicates we do not wish to categorise sentences like this as one of them. We want the ‘thinks’ component of the cognitive predicate covering the entire scope of the proper names and indexical pronouns in the whole sentence. Or put another way, we want each of the proper names and indexical pronouns to have a smaller scope than the cognitive operator ‘thinks’. In the sentence ‘Rome burns and Laura thinks that George is cute’ the scope of the proper name ‘Rome’ does not fall within the scope of ‘thinks’, thus the sentence is not classified as a de dicto structured cognitive predicate. Similarly, neither McKinsey, nor myself, would classify the sentence ‘Laura thinks that George is six feet tall and it is in fact true that George is six feet tall’ as a de dicto structured cognitive predicate. Why? The second occurrence of the term ‘George’ clearly does not fall within the scope of ‘thinks’ in that last sentence.

Are there readings of cognitive predicates that are not structurally de dicto? Are there such cases where a given term, *t*, in a simple sentence  $\phi(t)$  has large scope relative to a cognitive operator *c* in a sentence ‘*S* *c*s that  $\phi(t)$ ’? Examples where *t* is a proper name or indexical pronoun may be tricky to give. Indeed, it may be tricky to give uncontroversial examples at all. However, here is an attempt to give an example where the general term ‘arthritis’ is used for the relevant *t*: Consider the sentence ‘Oscar believes that he has arthritis in his thigh’. A non-structurally de dicto reading of the predicate – that is a *structurally de re* reading of the predicate – would be equivalent to ‘As regards to arthritis, Oscar believes that he has it in his thigh’. On the structurally de re reading the property ascribed by the predicate to Oscar is relational with respect to the type of condition meant by ‘arthritis’. This example is not uncontroversial, and it is arguable that the predicate should be read in a structurally de dicto manner where the term ‘arthritis’ has small scope relative to the cognitive operator ‘believes’. Of these controversial examples, I have no more to say in this chapter. All I wish to do is to give the reader a feel for the difference between de dicto structured cognitive predicates and structurally de re cognitive predicates.

A cognitive predicate’s being *structurally* de re or de dicto is to be sharply distinguished from its being *semantically* de re or de dicto (that is to say de re or de dicto *in meaning*). A semantically de re cognitive predicate ascribes a relation between an object (a *res*) and a cognitive predicate. It is arguable, though not uncontroversial, that some of the de dicto

structured cognitive predicates in the last examples such ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’, ‘Bob thinks that that pub is good’, ‘Sergei believes that you are rich’, ‘Sergei believes that I am rich’, ‘Sergei wishes that he is rich’ are all semantically de re. This is because, it could be argued, though not uncontroversially, that each of these cognitive predicates expresses a property that essentially involves a contingently existing ordinary physical object that is logically distinct from the thinker of whom the ascription is made.

Consider, for example, the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’, on some views, this predicate ascribes the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute**; and since this property logically implies that an ordinary contingently existing physical object distinct from Laura – the man George – exists, it is said that “the predicate is semantically de re with respect George”. That is to say, on the view under consideration, the predicate ascribes the relation characterised by the cognitive attitude verb ‘thinks’ between Laura and the ordinary contingently existing physical object George.

What about semantically de dicto predicates? It may be a controversial view that there are such predicates. If there are such predicates, one way of characterising them may be to say something like: the property expressed by the cognitive predicate in question has to be understood semantically as somehow characterising a subject’s cognitive state at least in part by one of the subject’s modes of thinking or way of referring to the (putative) object of her cognitive state.

The moral of this discussion is to show that there is (or may be) distinctions within the class of cognitive predicates that cut in two different ways: The cognitive predicate can be *structurally* de re or de dicto and the predicate may either be *semantically* de re or *semantically* de dicto.

However, the cognitive predicates that are going to be the focus of this chapter are structurally de dicto cognitive predicates.

## §2 Cognitive state individuation

In order to understand McKinsey’s position, we must distinguish sharply between a de dicto structured cognitive predicate which expresses a given property *which expresses a*

*property that fails to individuate – or fails to fully characterises – with respect to the cognitive state it describes* and a de dicto structured cognitive predicate *which expresses a property that individuates – or fully characterises – with respect to the cognitive state it describes*. I cannot stress the importance of this distinction enough, if we fail to recognise it, then we will fail to fully understand McKinsey's overall view.

Put in a slightly different way: this distinction has it that there is a view, on the one hand, there are de dicto structured cognitive predicates which express properties that do not individuate or fully characterise (the metaphysical nature of) one's mental states. Whereas, on the other hand, there are properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates which do individuate or fully characterise (the metaphysical nature of) one's mental states.

It is quite difficult to give uncontroversial examples of this distinction because, in order to give such examples, one needs to have a some kind of a formed view about the kind or type of properties expressed by such de dicto structured cognitive predicates. So, my best attempt at giving such examples to illustrate this distinction is this: In my first example, I shall assume (for the sake of giving a concrete example) a certain view of the properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates and then attempt to describe the distinction. In my second example, I'll assume an alternative view of the properties expressed by cognitive predicates and again attempt to describe the distinction.

The first view I'll assume says that de dicto structured cognitive predicates express the property of a subject believing a certain singular proposition. For example, on this view, the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Bob thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***. The one side of the distinction I am trying to describe says that the property does not characterise or fully individuate Laura's mental state. The other side of the distinction I am trying to describe says that the property does individuate or fully characterise the metaphysical nature of Laura's mental state.

An alternative view of the properties says that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Laura thinks that *the G is cute***, where property **G** is a description in the public language which George happens to satisfy. For example **G** might be the property **discoverer of the incompleteness theorem who is less than 5 feet tall**. The one side of the distinction I am trying to describe says that the

property **Laura thinks that *the G is cute*** does not individuate the mental state of Laura's that it describes. The other side of the distinction I am trying to describe says that the property **Laura thinks that *the G is cute*** does individuate the cognitive state of Laura's it describes.

Also the present discussion need not narrowly focus on the cognitive attitude verb 'thinks', it can be applied to a wide variety of cognitive attitude verbs such as 'believes', 'wishes', and so on. However, for the sake of building *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I should like to restrict our focus to cognitive attitude verbs occurring in de dicto structured cognitive predicates that are (a) stative, (b) followed by that clauses and (c) non-factive. I shall explain each of these restrictions in turn.

For example, if it is claimed that the sentences 'Bob remembers that that pub serves real ale' or 'Bob forgot that that pub serves real ale' are a de dicto structured cognitive predicates, they still may not qualify as one of the predicates that contain *stative* cognitive verbs because remembering and forgetting may be claimed to be processes rather than states.

The cognitive predicates 'Bob intends to visit that pub' or 'Bob desires to drink real ale', may be claimed to be de dicto structured but are not always followed by 'that' clauses, thus it is not clear that these predicates are of the form 'S **cs** that \$', where **c** denotes a stative cognitive attitude verb and \$ denotes a simple (non-cognitive) sentence. I am unsure whether *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be deployed against predicates which are not followed by 'that' clauses hence I shall set them aside.

Consider the cognitive predicate 'S knows that \$' where \$ is a simple non-cognitive sentence which expresses the proposition that *p*. On some views, such cognitive predicates express the property **S knows the proposition that *p*** and such a property is factive in the sense that the property logically implies that *p*. I shall be excluding de dicto structured cognitive predicates which express such factive properties in constructing *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

Is the verb 'knowledge' classed as a cognitive verb that can instantiate the **c** in the 'S **cs** that \$' formula? It is controversial whether propositional knowledge is a mental state and thus controversial whether 'knowledge' should be classed as a stative cognitive verb. I have never seen McKinsey's argument presented using knowledge as a stative cognitive attitude

verb and, thus, for the most part of this thesis I'll not attempt to present instances of his argument where 'knowledge' is treated as a stative cognitive verb.

To sum up, the cognitive predicates I wish to consider in constructing *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* are of the form 'S **c**s that \$', where **c** denotes a stative cognitive attitude verb and \$ denotes a simple (non-cognitive) sentence, which contains a small-scope proper name or indexical pronoun and 'S **c**s that \$' expresses a non-factive cognitive property.

Let's consider some examples using these alternative cognitive attitude verbs. Consider the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Bob wishes that that bottle contains whiskey'. On some views, it expresses the property **Bob wishes the proposition that *that bottle contains whiskey***. One view has it that the property **Bob wishes the proposition that *that bottle contains whiskey*** fails to individuate the mental state of Bob's which it describes, whereas another view has it that such a property is individuating. An alternative view about the properties expressed by cognitive predicates may claim that the property **Bob wishes the proposition that *the G contains whiskey***, where property **G** is some description in the public language which happens to pick out the bottle in question is expressed by the cognitive predicate. On some views, the property **Bob wishes the proposition that *the G contains whiskey*** fails to individuate the cognitive state it describes, whereas on other views, it succeeds in individuating.

If we fail to recognise this distinction between individuating properties and non-individuating properties just drawn, we'll have a tremendously hard job trying to understand my interpretation of "McKinsey Reasoning." At this point, you might reply:

"Look I understand your distinction but on my view, *every* de dicto structured cognitive predicates expresses an individuating property. Moreover, I don't even bother explicitly stating that I make such an assumption, I, typically, merely tacitly make it."

My response to this reply is: In the practice described above, you are making (perhaps tacitly) the very assumption which McKinsey wishes to call into question. In order to see this, consider the principle in the next section.

### §3 The Cognitive Predicate Assumption (*CPA*)

McKinsey wishes to cause problems for a certain view about whether a property expressed by a de dicto structured cognitive predicate individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes. The view McKinsey targets is the view that *every* de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes. Spelled out, the view McKinsey targets is this:

#### *Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*

Every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the mental state it describes.

*CPA* is a claim that lies in the sphere of philosophy of mind and, perhaps, philosophy of language. It transforms claims made in philosophy of language about properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates into claims about the metaphysical nature of mental states. For example, on some views, the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***. If we suppose that (a) the de dicto structured cognitive predicate is correctly ascribed to Laura, (b) the predicate expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** and (c) *CPA* is correct, then the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** individuates or fully characterises the metaphysical nature of Laura’s mental state.

McKinsey wishes to show that *CPA* is not compatible with two other entrenched theses in epistemology and philosophy of language, which I shall discuss later. The *CPA* thesis is a widely held claim in philosophy that has been held, perhaps tacitly, by some who are concerned with the question of whether or not the metaphysical nature of mental states are externally determined in some sense. However, why should we believe *CPA* in the first place?

*CPA* is logically implied by the conjunction of two other firmly entrenched views of the cognitive attitudes. Those two claims are:

#### *Propositional Theory of Individuation (PTI)*

All cognitive attitudes and states are individuated by their propositional contents.

*Relational Theory (RT)*

All cognitive attitude verbs express relations between persons and propositions.

I shall refer to the conjunction of PTI and RT as *The Proposition Theory*. *The Proposition Theory* is a widely held assumption in a number of branches of philosophy up to the present day and may enjoy this status due to the work of Frege (1892) and Russell. (1912).

So, *CPA* is an entrenched view in philosophy which can be traced back to Frege and Russell or so McKinsey contends. Why should we believe *CPA*? McKinsey suggests we may believe *CPA* because the *Proposition Theory* logically implies *CPA* and Frege and Russell's work supports the *Proposition Theory*.

## **§4 Privileged Access to individuating properties (PAI)**

McKinsey wishes to show that *CPA* is incompatible with entrenched views in philosophy of language and epistemology. For now, I want to set out the epistemological claim which is the focus of McKinsey's argument. The epistemological claim relates to the Cartesian predicament. It is worth quoting McKinsey at length on this matter:

"We tend to classify knowledge as a priori if it is knowledge that we can obtain "just by thinking," or in other words, knowledge that is not based upon perceptual observation or empirical investigation. It is because knowledge of meanings is like this that we are inclined to say that it is "a priori." Although I cannot give an adequate account here of what it means to obtain knowledge "just by thinking," perhaps the following characterization will suffice for my present purposes. I will say that a person's knowledge is a priori if and only if it would remain knowledge even if the person were radically deceived in his assumptions and inferences concerning the existence and nature of the physical world that is external to his mind. Thus on this characterization if a piece of my knowledge is a priori, then I would still have this knowledge even if I were a brain in a vat and had been systematically deceived by a mad scientist; I would still have this knowledge even if I were a nonphysical mind in a nonphysical world and had been systematically deceived by Descartes' evil genius.

On this account, there can be a priori knowledge of both necessary and contingent truths. For on this account, or so it seems to me, I know a priori that I exist, that the present time exists, and that various of my present mental experiences and states exist. These are of course things that might not have existed, but it seems to me that I have a priori knowledge of their existence, for these things would still exist and I would still know that they do, even if I were radically deceived in my assumptions about the external world."(1987, pp2-3).



My best attempt at outlining the thesis that McKinsey has in mind is this:

*Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}_i$ , which is individuated by property F, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses F.

The *PAI* thesis is an attempt to capture the Cartesian intuition that we have some kind of a privileged access to at least some of our mental states, even if certain sceptical hypotheses about the external world were true. For example, even if we were radically deceived about the existence of contingent physical objects and the world external to us, this strong notion of a priori knowledge allows that we can still know we possess the properties that individuate with respect to our own mental states in an a priori manner. Thus, the sense of 'a priori' in *PAI* is quite a strong one in the sense that it is knowledge which a subject could have, even if a Cartesian (or other) sceptical hypothesis concerning the nature of the external world and contingent objects logically distinct from the thinker were true. For example, if the hypothesis that the thinker is a brain in a vat were true, then the subject would still retain the a priori knowledge capacity of the factors that individuate with respect to her own mental states.

McKinsey, in fact, seems to state at least three characterisations of strong a priori knowledge capacities in his work:

S knows strongly a priori that  $p$  only if S knows that  $p$  without making any empirical assumptions. (1991a, 1987)

S knows strongly a priori that  $p$  only if {were S to inhabit a solipsistic world, S would know that  $p$ } (1987, pp2-3)

S knows strongly a priori that  $p$  iff S knowledge that  $p$  is not based even in part on the use of perceptual observation or empirical investigation and S knowledge that  $p$  cannot be undermined or outweighed by the addition of any additional empirical evidence. (2003)

One important element of the strong apriority under discussion is the fact that it is *unrevisable* in a certain sense. The sense in question is that there is no evidence involving ordinary contingent physical objects that are logically distinct from the subject that could outweigh or undermine the knowledge the subject possesses. Thus, the subject could

possess such knowledge in a solipsistic world. And, the subject can possess such knowledge without making any empirical assumptions. I shall call the kind of strong a priori knowledge that McKinsey has in mind *privileged access*.

According to McKinsey, precisely what properties result in a subject satisfying the *PAI* thesis? Any properties that individuate or fully characterise a subject's mental state, according to McKinsey's interpretation of the Cartesian predicament. Can we cite some examples of those states? It is tricky to do this unless you commit to a view on what properties you take to be individuating.

On McKinsey's view the only individuating properties are logically narrow properties. For McKinsey a logically narrow property is tricky to define. A rough attempt is this is:

#### *Logical Narrowness*

A property **F** possessed by a subject **S** is logically narrow iff **F** does not logically imply the existence of an object **o**, where **o** is neither identical to nor any part of any of **S**'s mental states, acts and experiences.

(see also my Chapter 2 for more on the notion of "narrowness")

What kind of properties count as logically narrow on McKinsey's view? One good candidate is the property expressed by cognitive predicates that express *de se* thought ascriptions. For example, the cognitive predicate 'Descartes believes that he himself is a thinking thing' expresses a logically narrow property, let's call it property **D**. Similarly the cognitive predicate 'Ollie thinks that he himself is a hero' expresses a logically narrow property, let's call it property **O**. Thus, on McKinsey's view of the Cartesian predicament, if the cognitive predicate 'Descartes believes that he himself is a thinking thing' is true, Descartes can know that he has a mental state individuated by **D** in a strong a priori manner. That is to say, were Descartes to possess the way of knowing indicated in the knowledge capacity, then it would depend on no empirical assumptions. Moreover, Descartes could possess this knowledge-capacity (and the knowledge indicated by the knowledge capacity) in a solipsistic world. Similarly, on McKinsey's view, there would be no evidence involving ordinary contingently existing physical object logically distinct from Descartes which could outweigh or undermine Descartes knowledge-capacity.

Similarly, if the cognitive predicate ‘Ollie thinks that he himself is a hero’ is true, according to McKinsey, Ollie can know strongly a priori that he has a mental state individuated by the property **O**.

Note that the fact that Ollie and Descartes can know the mental states they possess in a strong a priori manner does not indicate that they, in fact, do possess such knowledge. It might be, for example, the cognitive predicate ‘Ollie thinks that he himself is a hero’ is true but Ollie is not actively thinking the thought and it is a non-active thought of Ollie’s. In such circumstances, we may not be inclined to say Ollie *in fact* knows that he possesses a mental state individuated by property **O**. But we may still claim that Ollie *can* know strongly a priori that he possesses this property. (At this one might demand a more precise understanding of the use of the modal operator that figures in the PAI thesis. McKinsey (1987 pp3-7) has provided a fuller characterisation.)

## §5 Semantic Externalism (*SE*)

The final thesis which is the concern of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is a thesis which is the concern of philosophy of language. Specifically, it concerns an element of philosophy of language which is concerned with the properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates. In brief, the claim is that many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express a certain kind of property. The property in question is a logically wide property. How do we define a logically wide property? This, again is a tricky issue. We can start by looking at what it is for a property to not be logically narrow according to the last definition of logical narrowness:

### *Non-logical narrowness*

A property **F** possessed by a subject **S** is not logically narrow iff **F** does logically imply the existence of an object **o**, where **o** is neither identical to nor any part of any of **S**’s mental states, acts and experiences

Now, this definition won’t quite do for the purposes I have in mind because perhaps there are certain properties that logically imply the existence of certain objects which are neither physical nor contingently existing. On certain views, perhaps certain properties logically imply the existence of mathematical reality such as a prime number. But a prime number is not a physical object and its existence may not be contingent. I want the definition of a

logically wide property to be such that it logically implies the existence of an object which is contingently existing and physical. With this aim in mind here is a first shot at formulating logical wideness:

### *Logical wideness*

A property **F** possessed by a subject **S** is logically wide iff **F** does logically imply the existence of an object o, where (i) o is neither identical to nor any part of any of **S**'s mental states, acts and experiences and (ii) o is a physical object or object and (iii) o's existence is contingent.

The upshot of claiming that a given property is logically wide is to claim, roughly, that it logically implies the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects that are distinct from the thinker who may possess such a property.

So, the philosophy of language claim McKinsey is concerned with is the claim that many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide. But why should we find such a claim plausible? According to McKinsey there is a vast array of evidence in favour of the claim and one source of this evidence is semantic evidence adduced by Kripke. One of Kripke's famous cases setting out this evidence is the Gödel-Schmidt case (1972, p294). Practically the only thing many people have heard about the logician Kurt Gödel is that he discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic. But people's uses of the name 'Gödel' would still refer to Gödel even if it had not been Gödel but an unknown Viennese high school teacher named 'Schmidt' who actually discovered incompleteness. Since a similar point can be made regarding all the other achievements for which Gödel is famous, it is clear that the referent of the name 'Gödel' is not determined by any description, like 'the discoverer of incompleteness', that might be *commonly associated* with the name. But then, surely, the name 'Gödel' has no descriptive meaning in any public language since if it did, there would be a commonly associated description that determines its referent. Thus, the referent of the name 'Gödel' is completely exhausted by the contingently existing man - Gödel. Thus, the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that Gödel is cute' is logically wide in the sense that it logically implies the existence of a contingently existing physical object distinct from the thinker - Laura – the object in question is the contingently existing man Gödel. The property is logically wide since, given Kripke's semantic evidence, the referent of the name 'Gödel' is completely exhausted by the contingently existing man Gödel. What is the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that Godel is cute' if the Godel-Schmidt case is correct? It is to property **Laura thinks the singular**

**proposition that Gödel is cute.** Thus, given Kripkean semantic evidence, we can say that:

The proposition that *Laura thinks that Gödel is cute* logically implies the proposition that *Gödel exists*.

Kaplan's (1979) work on the modal properties of sentences containing indexicals also supports *SE*. If 'S thinks that I am rich' is true then the predicate expresses a property that logically implies the existence of an ordinary contingently existing human being distinct from the speaker S. Similar comments can be made about cognitive predicates of the form 'S believes that you are rich' 'S believes that he is rich' and 'S believes that that man is rich'.

Spelled out, the philosophy of language thesis that McKinsey has in mind is this:

*Semantic Externalism (SE)*

Many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide (in the sense of logically implying the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the thinker).

Note immediately, that *SE* is a *semantic* thesis a thesis about the *meaning of* cognitive predicates – de dicto structured cognitive predicates to be precise. Therefore, note that *SE* is not a thesis about the metaphysical nature of mental content. *SE* makes no claim about the *metaphysical nature of mental states*. Specifically, *SE* is not, therefore, a thesis about the mental content one possesses being logically wide (or “wide” in some other sense). In order to get the result that the mental state one possesses is logically wide, one would need to find a logically wide property expressed by a de dicto structured cognitive predicate and *then claim that this property individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes*. Thus, one quick route to establishing that the metaphysical nature of mental content is logically wide is to claim that *both SE and CPA* are true.

Note that in this section I've attempted to motivate *SE* by using explanations that are neutral on the question as to whether the thesis *CPA* is true. I have given what might be called “a *CPA*-neutral explanation of *SE*”. There are other alternative explanations of the truth of *SE* which require the truth of *CPA* in order to work successfully. I shall discuss these alternative explanations of *SE* – “what I shall call *CPA*-dependent explanations of *SE*” later on in this chapter.

## §6 Simplified *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

So far, then, according to McKinsey, we have the work of Frege and Russell suggesting the plausibility of *CPA*, the Cartesian predicament supporting *PAI* and semantic evidence from Kripke, Kaplan and perhaps others supporting *SE*. A broad-brushstroke description of McKinsey's idea is this: if we jointly assume *CPA*, *PAI* and *SE*, we can derive an absurd conclusion. Since we'll want to avoid that absurd conclusion, we should reject the view that conjunction of *CPA*, *PAI* and *SE* are true and reject at least one of these claims.

Thus, I have completed two stages or levels of a paradox building recipe. I have shown that a number of claims enjoy a great deal of plausibility and are motivated by literature in the history of philosophy, thus completing the philosophical basis stage. I have repeatedly stated that I aim to show that the conjunction of these claims are jointly incompatible, thus completing the *target-identification stage*.

I shall now make some headway into completing the mechanical stage of building the paradox. I was inspired to write the paradox this way by McKinsey (1994) which explicitly emphasises the role of *CPA* (see especially pp308-9).

On my interpretation, what I call *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* aims to show that the following three claims are jointly incompatible:

### *Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}$ , which is individuated by property **F**, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses **F**.

### *Semantic Externalism (SE)*

Many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide (in the sense of logically implying the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the thinker).

### *Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*

Every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the mental state it describes.

An extremely broad and simplistic outline of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* involves adhering to the following recipe: First pick a de dicto structured cognitive predicate which expresses a certain property that satisfies each of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI*. Second, show how an absurd conclusion can be derived from the claims that follow from the de dicto structured cognitive predicate and its property's satisfaction of each of the three claims. For example, assume the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' is true, and assume a particular explanation of *SE* where the predicate expresses the logically wide property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***, by jointly assuming *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* we can reason thus:

*Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

(STMR0) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' is true [assumption].

(STMR1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** [From *SE* and STMR0]

(STMR2) The proposition that *Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists* [from *SE*, STMR1 and STMR0].

(STMR3) The property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From *CPA*, STMR1 and STMR0]

(STMR4) Laura can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** [From *PAI*, STMR3].

Therefore,

(STMR5) Laura can know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from STMR2 and STMR4 and certain auxiliary claims to be described]

But,

(STMR6) Laura cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [the consequence of an auxiliary claim to be described]

Therefore,

(STMR7) Laura both can and cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from STMR5 and STMR6]

As I remarked earlier, *Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is a very broad and simplistic outline of my interpretation of "McKinsey Reasoning". It is simplistic because there are several claims in the reasoning I have suppressed in order to avoid clutter. One suppressed claim is the principle that licences the inference from (STMR2) and (STMR4) to (STMR5): It is a closure principle governing the extent of our strong a priori knowledge capacities across a meta-logical implication. I shall be commenting upon this principle later. A

second suppressed claim is a thesis which claims that Laura cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists*.

A simple way of explaining *Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is to compare these two predicaments:

#### *The Cartesian Predicament*

A subject, *S*, possesses a certain property *F* which individuates her mental states. By *PAI*, *S* can know strongly a priori that she possesses *F*. *S* cannot deduce the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects from her possession of *F*. Consequently, *S* cannot know strongly a priori that contingently existing ordinary physical objects exist.

#### *The Bloated Cartesian Predicament*

A subject, *S*, possesses a certain property *F* which individuates her mental states. By *PAI*, *S* can know strongly a priori that she possesses *F*. By *CPA* and *SE*, property *F* is logically wide and individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes. Thus, *S* can deduce the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects from her possession of *F*. Consequently, *S* can know strongly a priori that contingently existing ordinary physical objects exist.

*Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is moving us from the *Cartesian Predicament* to the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*. However, intuitively, the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament* is absurd.

Note immediately that both *CPA* and *SE* need to be added to *PAI* to shift us from the *Cartesian Predicament* to the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*. Adding only one of *CPA* or *SE* to *PAI* is not sufficient to induce the shift.

In order to see this, consider the state of affairs of assuming *CPA* and *PAI* only. On this picture, every property expressed by a de dicto structured cognitive predicate individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes and according to *PAI* a subject can know that she possesses such properties. But why think these properties are logically wide? Perhaps for example, these properties are all logically narrow. In order to force the result that some properties are logically wide, we need to assume *SE*.

Similarly, assuming *SE* and *PAI* only does not shift us from the *Cartesian Predicament* to the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*. On this picture, according to *PAI*, a subject can know that she possesses properties that individuate with respect to her mental state. And,



according to *SE*, many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide. But why think these properties individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe? Perhaps for example, the properties expressed do not individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe. In order to force the result that such properties individuate we need to add the assumption *CPA*.

Here is another explanation of *Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*: Assume that a de dicto structured cognitive predicate involving an ordinary small scope proper name is true. According to semantic externalism, such a predicate expresses a logically wide property. According to *CPA*, this logically wide property individuates with respect to mental state. According to *PAI*, a thinker can know strongly a priori that she possesses this property. But, according to *SE*, it is an existence presupposition of the logically wide property that a contingently existing object logically distinct from the thinker exists. And, the thinker must know strongly a priori that all existence presuppositions of the mental state individuating properties she possesses, for otherwise she would not know that she possesses these properties strongly a priori, contrary to the *PAI* assumption. So, the thinker must know strongly a priori that a contingently existing physical object logically distinct from her exists. But it is absurd that any thinker can know strongly a priori that a contingently existing physical object logically distinct from her exists.

In the next section, I shall continue discussing the mechanical stage of the “McKinsey Reasoning” I shall be defending. In the next section, I shall spell out the suppressed claims or theses used by *Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. This amounts to spelling out why, in the explanation above, I am helping myself to claims such as “And, the thinker must know strongly a priori that all existence presuppositions of the mental state individuating properties she possesses, for otherwise she would not know that she possesses these properties strongly a priori...” and “it is absurd that any thinker can know strongly a priori that a contingently existing physical object logically distinct from her exists..”

## §7 *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Proper*

In *Simplistic Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* I suppressed two claims: The instance of a certain closure principle governing the extent of our strong a priori knowledge capacities and a claim about how a subject cannot know that contingently existing physical objects logically distinct from her exist. It is useful to see how these suppressed claims work in the context

of a piece of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, which I shall call *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance*. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance* assumes that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ is true, and assumes, a particular explanation of *SE* where the predicate expresses the logically wide property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***, by jointly assuming *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* we can reason thus:

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance*

(TMRI0) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ is true [assumption].

(TMRI1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** [From *SE* and TMRI0]

(TMRI2) The proposition that *Laura thinks that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists* [from *SE*, TMRI1 and TMRI0].

(TMRI3) The property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From *CPA*, TMRI1 and TMRI0]

(TMRI4) Laura can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** [From *PAI*, TMRI3].

(TMRI5) If {Laura can know a priori that she thinks that George is cute and the proposition that *Laura thinks that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists*}, then Laura can know a priori that George exists. [from meta-closure principle *CA*]

Therefore,

(TMRI6) Laura can know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from TMRI2 and TMRI4 and TMRI5]

But,

(TMRI7) Laura cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMRI8) Laura both can and cannot know strongly a priori that George exists [from TMRI6 and TMRI7]

Thus, the meta-closure principle I am using as one of the auxiliary claims is this:

(TMRI5) If {Laura can know a priori that she thinks that George is cute and the proposition that *Laura thinks that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists*}, then Laura can know a priori that George exists.

Note immediately, Laura, nor any subject, is not required by closure principle (TMR5) to have any epistemic attitude (a priori or otherwise) to the truth if Laura thinks George is cute, then George exists. Indeed, as we shall see later, myself and McKinsey deny the following claim:

*LT-Instance*

If the proposition that *Laura thinks that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists*, then (if Laura thinks that George is cute, then George exists) is a logical truth.

The meta-closure principle (TMRI5) is an instance of the following more general closure principle:

*Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

Again, note immediately the meta-closure principle *CA* does not require that any subject have any epistemic attitude such as knowledge or the capacity to know (a priori or otherwise) to the truth if *p*, then *q*. Indeed, McKinsey and myself deny the following claim:

*LT*

For any propositions *p* and *q*: If the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then (if *p*, then *q*) is a logical truth.

Our denials of *LT* and *LT-Instance* commit us to a neutral free logic (more of this in the thesis chapters). The denial of *LT* helps one resist certain kinds of counter examples to principles *CA* and (TMRI5).

Note also that meta-closure principles like (TMRI5) and *CA* might not be what some epistemologists are used to: Some epistemologists may be focussed on trying to capture how a subject acquires knowledge by deduction and may want to stuff the antecedent of my principle with clauses something like ‘*S* deduces *p* from *q*’, thus turning it into a different principle, which I would not want to use in my presentation of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. These issues are discussed in later chapters.

Other epistemologists might think that the *meta*-closure principle *CA* just is the same as its analogous *standard* closure principle. The analogous standard closure principle in question is this:

*Standard closure of the capacity for a priori knowledge across logical implication (SCA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and it is a logical truth that (if *p*, then *q*), then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

Note the difference in the phrasing of the second conjunct between *CA* and *SCA*: *CA* is concerned with the “meta-proposition” which says “the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*” whereas *SCA* is concerned with the logical truth (if *p*, then *q*).

These epistemologists may think that the meta-closure principle *CA* just is the standard closure principle *SCA* and then drawing on their skills of finding counter examples to standard closure principles in other epistemological debates, they may think finding counter-examples to *SCA* amounts to also finding examples to *CA*. However, the meta-closure principle *CA* and the standard closure principle *SCA* are not related in the way desired by such an epistemologist unless one also assumes *LT* (or something even stronger than *LT*). But, to repeat the point, myself and McKinsey deny *LT*; hence counter-examples to *SCA* will not necessarily constitute counter-examples to *CA*. I discuss these issues in more detail in later chapters.

It now remains for me to suggest why closure principle *CA* – or at least the instances of it used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* – is at least *prima facie* plausible. Let’s focus on the instance of *CA* used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance* which is this:

(TMR15) If {Laura can know strongly a priori that she thinks that George is cute and the proposition that *Laura thinks that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists*}, then Laura can know strongly a priori that George exists.

In effect my explanation of (TMR5) is that Laura can know a priori that *George exists because of the antecedent of (TMR5)*. What I am suggesting is that the facts that support the truth of its antecedent just are the very facts that support the truth of its consequent.

Specifically, the explanation of the antecedent of (TMR5) is that, given *SE*, the property possessed by Laura when the de dicto structured cognitive predicate is true of her is a logically wide property. Why is it a logically wide property? In this particular case it is

because the property essentially involves a contingently existing ordinary physical object. But if such a property is individuating and *PAI* is true, Laura must know strongly a priori that she possesses this property and, given the definition of strong apriority must know that George exists.

The other claim used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance* which I have not yet discussed is:

(TMR17) Laura cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists* [from *Environmental Access Thesis*].

The *Environmental Access* thesis is phrased thus:

*Environmental Access*

For any subject, *S*, and any proposition that *e*, where *e* asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, *S* cannot know strongly a priori that *e*.

I take the *Environmental Access* thesis to be plausible by appealing to the various characterisations of strong a priori knowledge that McKinsey uses. For example, consider a typical case of a subject, *S*'s, knowledge that *e*. Could *S* know that *e* in a solipsistic world? Of course not: in a solipsistic world the proposition that *e* would be false, since the proposition that *e* concerns the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects that are logically distinct from *S*. Hence, if *S* has the capacity to know that *e*, it cannot be a capacity to know strongly a priori that *e*. Another example: if *S* knows that *e*, then can *S* know that *e* without making any empirical assumptions? *S* needs to assume that she is not in a solipsistic world. But such an assumption is an empirical assumption. So, if *S* can know that *e*, it cannot be a capacity to know strongly a priori that *e*.

## §8 *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* Template

The overall template for *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is this.

Let **c** be a stative cognitive operator. Let *S* be a subject. Let  $\$$  be a simple non-cognitive sentence. Then for any non-factive de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$$ ’ which expresses a logically wide property **F**, where **F** describes *S*’s cognitive state; and some proposition that *e*, which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, we can reason as follows:

(TMR0) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$$ ’ is true [assumption].

(TMR1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$$ ’ expresses the property **F** [From *SE* and TMR0]

(TMR2) The proposition that *F* logically implies the proposition that *e* [from *SE*, TMR1 and TMR0].

(TMR3) The property **F** individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From *CPA*, TMR1 and TMR0]

(TMR4) *S* can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property **F** [From *PAI*, TMR3].

(TMR5) If {*S* can know a priori that she possesses property **F** and the proposition that *F* logically implies the proposition that *e*}, then *S* can know a priori that *e*. [from meta-closure principle *CA*]

Therefore,

(TMR6) *S* can know strongly a priori that *e* [from TMR2 and TMR4 and TMR5]

But,

(TMR7) *S* cannot know strongly a priori that *e* [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMR8) *S* both can and cannot know strongly a priori that *e* [from TMR6 and TMR7]

Note that the cognitive attitude verb **c** need not be an instance of a subject actively or occurrently thinking. Note also that the simple sentence  $\$$  need not contain an ingredient term that is directly referential. That is to say,  $\$$  need not be of the form  $\$(t)$  where *t* is a term whose referent is completely exhausted by a contingently existing ordinary physical object. However, perhaps the easiest, reader friendly, instances of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* use certain de dicto structured cognitive predicates of the form ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$(t)$ ’ where *t* is a directly referential term. In short, a simple sentence  $\$$  containing a directly referential term *t* in de dicto structured cognitive predicates of the form ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$$ ’ is sufficient for *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to be applied to it but it is not necessary. What is a necessary condition for *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is a simple sentence  $\$$  occurring in de dicto structured cognitive predicates of the form ‘*S* **cs** that  $\$$ ’ in some way or another

produces the result that the property expressed by the predicate is logically wide. The example in the next section is an attempt to cite an instance of traditional McKinsey Reasoning where none of the terms of an (alleged) de dicto structured cognitive predicate are directly referential.

## §9 Non-direct referential examples of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

For example, consider the cognitive predicate ‘Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful’. On some, controversial, views this predicate is de dicto structured. Moreover, on some, controversial, views this predicate expresses the property **Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful** and the property logically implies the existence of a speech community of human beings who are logically distinct from Oscar. Let  $e^*$  be the proposition that *a speech community of human beings who are logically distinct from Oscar exist*. Thus, on these controversial views, the instance of *SE* in question we have is:

### *SE-Arthritis Instance*

The proposition that *Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful* logically implies the proposition that  $e$ .

Note that *SE-Arthritis Instance* does not obtain because some term in the (alleged) de dicto structured cognitive predicate is directly referential.

Were we to agree with the controversial views just described we could construct the following instance of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

### *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Instance-II*

(TMR10) The cognitive predicate ‘Oscar believes that arthritis is painful’ is true and de dicto structured [assumption].

(TMR11) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Oscar believes that arthritis is painful’ expresses the property **Oscar believes that arthritis is painful** [From *SE* and TMR10]

(TMR12) The proposition that *Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful* logically implies the proposition that  $e^*$  [from *SE*, TMR11 and TMR10].

(TMR13) The property **Oscar believes that arthritis is painful** individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From *CPA*, TMR11 and TMR10]

(TMR114) Oscar can know strongly a priori that he possesses the property **Oscar believes that arthritis is painful** [From PAI, TMR113].

(TMR115) If {Oscar can know a priori that he thinks that he thinks that arthritis is painful and the proposition *t* that *Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful* logically implies the proposition that *e\**}, then Oscar can know a priori that *e\**. [from meta-closure principle CA]

Therefore,

(TMR116) Oscar can know strongly a priori that *e\** [from TMR112 and TMR114 and TMR115]

But,

(TMR117) Oscar cannot know strongly a priori that *e\** [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMR118) Oscar both can and cannot know strongly a priori that *e\** [from TMR116 and TMR117]

I, myself, do not agree with the claim that ‘Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful’ is de dicto structured and expresses a logically wide property (nor would McKinsey). I am just using the controversial claim to illustrate the power of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* when it is combined with these controversial views. I have also used the example to illustrate that it does not require any of the terms of the simple sentence in the cognitive predicate utilised by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to be directly referential.

## §10 *Kind Term Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

On some views the predicate ‘S thinks that water is wet’ expresses a certain property, say property **F\***, which is logically wide, not because the term ‘water’ is directly referential (in the sense that its referent is completely exhausted by the contingently existing ordinary physical substance water). Rather, on these views, property **F\*** is logically wide *due to some other explanation*, which does not require the term ‘water’ to be directly referential. For example, certain explanations of *SE* might have it that property **F\*** is logically wide because its possession by S requires the existence of planet earth or a certain kind of speech community distinct from S or some disjunction of these conditions. On other views, the predicate ‘S believes that water is wet’ expresses a certain property, say property **F\***, which is logically wide, *precisely because* the term ‘water’ is directly referential in that its referent is completely exhausted by the substance water. Is there any way of capturing these various explanations of *SE* in a concise way? Here is one attempt:



Let's say  $E$  is a proposition asserting the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from the thinking subject,  $S$ . For example, the proposition that  $E$ , might be the proposition that *planet Earth exists* or it might be the proposition that *a speech community of more than one member logically distinct from  $S$  exists* or it may be a different proposition formed out of the disjunction of the last two propositions or it may simply be the proposition that *water exists*. Now the general instance of  $SE$  that I have been trying to articulate is this:

#### *SE-Water Instance*

The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that water is wet' expresses a property that is logically wide.

Or, put another way we might say that, according to  $SE$ ,

the proposition that  $F^*$  logically implies the proposition that  $E$ .

#### *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning Water Instance*

(TMRW0) The cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that water is wet' is true and de dicto structured [assumption].

(TMRW1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that water is wet' expresses the property  $F^*$  [From  $SE$  and TMRW0]

(TMRW2) The proposition that  $F^*$  logically implies the proposition that  $E$  [from  $SE$ , TMRW1 and TMRW0].

(TMRW3) The property  $F^*$  individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes [From CPA, TMRW1 and TMRW0]

(TMRW4) Oscar can know strongly a priori that he possesses the property  $F^*$  [From PAI, TMRW3].

(TMRW5) If {Oscar can know a priori that he possesses property  $F^*$  and the proposition  $t$  that *Oscar thinks that arthritis is painful* logically implies the proposition that  $E$ }, then Oscar can know a priori that  $E$ . [from meta-closure principle CA]

Therefore,

(TMRW6) Oscar can know strongly a priori that  $E$  [from TMRW2 and TMRW4 and TMRW5]

But,

(TMRW7) Oscar cannot know strongly a priori that  $E$  [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMRW8) Oscar both can and cannot know strongly a priori that  $E$  [from TMRW6 and TMRW7]

At this point it might be enquired, precisely what is the property  $F^*$ ? I have not specified because there are a variety of different views on what the property is. However, many of the examples I shall be considering on various literature on the McKinsey problem simply take property  $F^*$  to be the property **Oscar thinks that *water is wet***.

## §11 Responses to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*

In this section I wish to briefly detail the responses to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. For convenience, I shall group together the relevant instances of the meta-closure principle *CA* and *Environmental Access* thesis and label them *auxiliary claims*.

Responses to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* are as follows. The first is to embrace the reasoning as sound, accept the auxiliary claims and reject the conjunction of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI*. McKinsey responds to the reasoning in this way and I endorse his response. This doesn't end the story for those who endorse this first response. We are faced with the question: Which of the theses of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI* should we reject? Given the support from the history of philosophy that each of the theses enjoy, this is a difficult question. Not only do we have to state which of *SE*, *CPA* or *PAI* we would reject, we also need to explain why, in the face of the support it enjoys, we need to reject it. There is also the possibility of rejecting more than one of *SE*, *CPA*, and *PAI*.

McKinsey, himself, opts for rejecting *CPA* alone. He suggests that there is sufficient evidence to explain why the thesis is false and to undermine the support from the work of Frege and Russell which the thesis seems to enjoy. McKinsey, thus, accepts both *PAI* and *SE*. I shall also be tentatively endorsing the package that McKinsey recommends.

The second response to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is to dispute its soundness by disputing the auxiliary claims it uses. Specifically, this response amounts to denying at least one of the *Environmental Access* thesis and the instance of the meta-closure principle *CA*. I do not endorse this response and I shall be defending the instance of the meta-closure principle *CA* used by the reasoning and the *Environmental Access* thesis in later chapters.

There are also a further two responses that I shall mention and set aside. The third response is to dispute the validity of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. My view is that the argument is valid and I have not seen any literature challenging its validity. The fourth

response is to reject the starting assumption which claims a given cognitive predicate is de dicto structured and expresses a property which describes a certain cognitive state. I think that, there are certain cognitive predicates where such a response may work. But I do not think that the response will work for every possible cognitive predicate that can be constructed. Thus, at best, this fourth response simply amounts to claiming that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* may be restricted in scope but it does not go as far as claiming that it is *outright wrong* (in the sense that it has sound instances of it can never be constructed).

## §12 The presentational defect of conjoining CPA and PAI

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be modified by conjoining the theses *CPA* and *PAI* to create the following claim:

*Privileged access to content (PAC)*

If S thinks that *p*, then S can know strongly a priori that she thinks that *p*.

*PAC*, unlike *PAI*, does not speak of “properties which may individuate a given mental state.” *PAC* effectively takes the truth of *CPA* as a foregone conclusion, whereas *PAI* is silent about the truth of *CPA*. Specifically, *PAC* says something like “if the cognitive property **S thinks that *p*** is true and is an individuating property, then S can know strongly a priori that she possesses this property.”

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be slightly modified to show that *PAC* is incompatible with *SE*. I shall call this variation *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation*. See McKinsey (2002, pp199-212) for examples.

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation*

Let S be a subject. Let \$ be a simple non-cognitive sentence. Let the proposition that *p* be the proposition expressed by sentence \$. Then for any non-factive de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form ‘S thinks that \$’ which expresses the property **S thinks that *p***, and some proposition that *e*, which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, we can reason as follows:

(TMRPV0) The cognitive predicate ‘S thinks that  $p$ ’ is true and de dicto structured [assumption].

(TMRPV1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘S thinks that  $p$ ’ expresses the property **S thinks that  $p$**  [From *SE* and TMRPV0]

(TMRPV2) The proposition that *S thinks that  $p$*  logically implies the proposition that  $e$  [from *SE*, TMRPV1 and TMRPV0].

(TMRPV3) S can know strongly a priori that she thinks that  $p$  [From *PAC*, TMRPV1].

(TMRPV4) If {S can know a priori that she thinks that  $p$  and the proposition that *S thinks that  $p$*  logically implies the proposition that  $e$ }, then S can know a priori that  $e$ . [from meta-closure principle *CA*]

Therefore,

(TMRPV5) S can know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from TMRPV2 and TMRPV3 and TMRPV4]

But,

(TMRPV6) S cannot know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMRPV7) S both can and cannot know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from TMRPV5 and TMRPV6]

How should we respond to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation*. McKinsey and myself would still suggest the same solution as before which was to keep *PAI* and *SE* and reject *CPA* alone. But how do we transpose this response to the claims in *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation*? Our rejection of *CPA* commits us to rejecting *PAC*, so we’d say something like “we’ll keep *SE* and reject *PAC*” we might add a comment that “in place of *PAC*, we’d propose the restricted principle of privileged access *PAI*.”

However, comments like the last two in scare quotes, when taken in isolation, disguise the true nature of our response which is ultimately due to our rejection of *CPA*. This is why I have gone to great lengths in this chapter to labour the importance of *CPA* in “McKinsey Reasoning”. Thus, one presentational defect with *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation* is that it fails to emphasise the role of *CPA* in the creation and one of the proposed solutions to “McKinsey Reasoning”.

There is also another, second, presentational defect with *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation* which, again, stems from its suppression of *CPA*. In shifting from *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation* we have slightly altered the mechanical stage of the paradox we have been building. Now, this change has a knock-on effect at the higher paradox building stages (the *philosophical basis stage* and the *target identification stage*). Specifically, the target of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning PAC Variation* is to show that *PAC* and *SE* are jointly incompatible.

What is the philosophical basis of *PAC*? It cannot just be McKinsey's interpretation of the Cartesian predicament because that only supported *PAI*. So, the philosophical basis for accepting *PAC* must be given by something more than just the Cartesian predicament. So, the philosophical basis for accepting *PAC* must be both the Cartesian predicament and the Frege-Russell support for *CPA*. Specifically, the basis for accepting *PAC* must be that we have privileged access to individuating properties in the sense of having the capacity to strongly a priori know we possess them (the Cartesian predicament element) and all such properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates are individuating (the Frege-Russell *CPA* element). But does anyone who is commenting on "McKinsey Reasoning", especially McKinsey himself, make this clear? Apart from McKinsey (1994) I'd suggest not. In particular McKinsey (1987, 2002, 2003 and 1991a) do not make this clear.

I'd suggest that the philosophical basis for accepting *PAC* is not made clear in the last quotation. Hence, although it is possible to properly state the philosophical basis for accepting *PAC*, *PAC* has so much detail (or so many sub-theses) packed into it commentators have sometimes failed to fully explain it.

### §13 Conjoining *CPA* and *SE* and more presentational defects

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be modified by conjoining the theses *CPA* and *SE* to create the following claim:

*Logical Externalism about Mental Content (LET)*

In some cases a subject, *S*, is thinking that *p* and the content that *p* is logically wide and *S*'s thought is individuated by the property of being a thought that has the content that *p*.

*LET*, unlike *SE*, does not speak of "properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates being logically wide." Instead, *LET*, speaks of the metaphysical nature of mental states being logically wide.

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be modified to show that *LET* is incompatible with *PAI* in the following way (see McKinsey 2002, pp212-7 for examples).

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation*

Let  $S$  be a subject. Let  $\$$  be a simple non-cognitive sentence. Let the proposition that  $p$  be the proposition expressed by sentence  $\$$ . Then for any non-factive de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form ‘ $S$  thinks that  $\$$ ’ which expresses the property  **$S$  thinks that  $p$** , and some proposition that  $e$ , which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from  $S$ , we can reason as follows:

(TMRLV0) The cognitive predicate ‘ $S$  thinks that  $\$$ ’ is true and de dicto structured [assumption].

(TMRLV1) The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘ $S$  thinks that  $\$$ ’ expresses the property  **$S$  thinks that  $p$**  and this property individuates the mental state it describes [From *LET* and TMRLV0]

(TMRLV2) The proposition that  $S$  thinks that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $e$  [from *LET*, TMRPV1 and TMRLV0].

(TMRLV3)  $S$  can know strongly a priori that she thinks that  $p$  [From *PAI*, TMRLV1].

(TMRLV4) If { $S$  can know a priori that she thinks that  $p$  and the proposition that  $S$  thinks that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $e$ }, then  $S$  can know a priori that  $e$ . [from meta-closure principle CA]

Therefore,

(TMRLV5)  $S$  can know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from TMRLV2 and TMRLV3 and TMRLV4]

But,

(TMRLV6)  $S$  cannot know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from *Environmental Access Thesis*]

Therefore,

(TMRLV7)  $S$  both can and cannot know strongly a priori that  $e$  [from TMRLV5 and TMRLV6]

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation* is technically or mechanically sound but, it suffers from at least two potential presentational defects.

Firstly, my (and McKinsey’s) solution to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation* is “keep *PAI* and reject *LET*”. Perhaps we would add “replace *ME* with *LET*”. But, the comment in the last two sets of scare quotes masks why we want to reject *LET*. One can reject *LET* by rejecting *SE* or *CPA* or both, and our position is to *only* reject *CPA*. Our rejection of *CPA* is neither being made explicit, nor being explained in the last two sets of scare quotes.

Secondly, what is the philosophical basis of accepting *LET*? It cannot just be acceptance of *SE*, since *SE* speaks merely of “de dicto structured cognitive predicates”, not of “the metaphysical nature of mental states”. Rather, the philosophical basis of *LET* must be that *SE* is true and every property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicates which *SE* speaks of is individuating (which is in effect to add the Frege-Russell support for *CPA* to the explanation). So, given the amount of detail (or sub-theses) packed into *LET* one has to very attentive to detail in order to accurately and fully explain why accepting *LET* is plausible.

## §14 Road ahead

Ideally, my plan for the rest of the thesis would have been to fully defend the auxiliary claims used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, thus securing the incompatibility of the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* and then sketch my solution of rejecting *CPA* alone; and, finally, sketch a positive picture of the non-factive and stative cognitive attitudes.

However, matters are not so straightforward because a number of commentators on “McKinsey Reasoning” do not recognise it as being what I have called *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Rather, though a series of misunderstandings, with which I have some sympathy, they take “McKinsey Reasoning” to be attempting to show that two other theses that are not *PAI*, *CPA* or *SE* (but may have some similarities with them) are incompatible and a necessary part of the reasoning to show this involves some subject performing a deduction.

Commentary on this alternative kind of alternative “McKinsey Reasoning” remains prominent and widespread to the present day. So much so, that perhaps some of the best responses to the *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* which I have set out might be buried within the commentary on this alternative kind of “McKinsey Reasoning”. So, a detour into considering this kind of alternative “McKinsey Reasoning” is required for this reason alone.

Moreover, there is some interesting “cross-talk” between the proponents of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* (specifically, McKinsey himself) and commentators on the alternative kind of “McKinsey Reasoning”. The “cross-talk” is mostly one way: from McKinsey to the commentators on alternative “McKinsey Reasoning” (see McKinsey (2001) and,

especially, McKinsey (2002, 2003). The “cross-talk” reveals some interesting elements of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the alternative kind of “McKinsey Reasoning”.

It is rather difficult to dive into a discussion of this alternative kind of “McKinsey Reasoning”. One needs some kind of context to thoroughly understand it. This, in turn, requires a discussion of some old thought experiments given by Putnam and Burge. This discussion is required for at least two reasons. Firstly, some variants of the alternative “McKinsey Reasoning” narrowly focus on instances of the reasoning which use cognitive predicates containing kind terms and, in so doing, are drawing on certain interpretations of work from Burge and Putnam which comment on such cognitive predicates. Secondly, some versions of alternative “McKinsey Reasoning” rely quite heavily on a subject being agnostic about the application conditions of a concept she possesses (or perhaps even misunderstanding the application conditions of a concept she possesses) and in so doing draw on Burge’s famous “arthritis” thought experiment, which discusses such cases. So, in the next chapter, I shall discuss the relevant work of Putnam and Burge.

In Chapter 3, I shall set out a template of the alternative form of “McKinsey Reasoning” and contrast it with my *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. With that contrast in the open, in chapters 4 and 5 I shall discuss the auxiliary claims used by both *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and alternative “McKinsey Reasoning”.

In chapters 6, 7 and 8 I look at some “straightforward responses” to the types of “McKinsey Reasoning”. These “straightforward responses” grant the various auxiliary claims (at least for the sake of argument) and, instead, consider rejecting one of the other main claims of the reasoning. Chapter 8 presents McKinsey’s rejection of *CPA*, which I endorse. Chapter 9 sketches the positive picture of thought McKinsey has constructed and which I tentatively endorse.

Chapter 10 considers various related alleged paradoxes and philosophical problems that may be thought to be related to “McKinsey Reasoning”. I suggest that these problems tacitly assume *CPA*, and with the role of that assumption explicitly stated and rejected they can be resolved.



## Chapter 2

In §1 and §3 I shall briefly review the famous examples of Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979). This is important because some of those who comment on “McKinsey Reasoning” tend to draw on certain interpretations of Putnam and Burge’s famous work. In §2 I briefly discuss some extensions of Putnam’s work which relating to the so called ‘achievement problem’. §4 concludes.

### §1 The Putnam Thought Experiment

The Putnam scenario might be described thus:

Twin-Earth is planet which is very distant from Earth (in the actual world). Oscar resides on Earth. Oscar has a duplicate or a doppelganger on a distant planet (in the actual world) called Twin-Earth. Twin-Earth is qualitatively the same as Earth except that on Twin-Earth the stuff that fills the lakes, rivers and so on is not water but a chemical compound XYZ, which is macroscopically indistinguishable from water but has a different chemical structure to water. Both Oscar and his internal duplicate are ignorant of the chemical composition of water and the substance in place of water on Twin-Earth, say twater. According to Putnam, both Oscar and Toscar are alike in all their “narrow states”. Now when Oscar utters the word, water, intuition has it that he picks out only the substance H<sub>2</sub>O on earth. Whereas when Toscar uses the token ‘water’, Toscar’s token of the word picks out only the substance XYZ on Twin-Earth.

The Putnam example raises up to four issues. The first, is to account for the difference in meaning (if any) between Oscar’s use of the word ‘water’ and his twin’s use of the word. The second issue is to account for the difference (if any) between the twins’ *grasp of* meaning of the word ‘water’. A third issue concerns accounting for the difference (if any) between the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Oscar believes that water is wet’ and the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Toscar believes water is wet’. A fourth issue is to account for the difference (if any) between the metaphysical nature of Oscar’s mental state compared to the mental state of his twin. Some of these issues are parasitic upon another: For example, if there simply is in fact no difference between the meaning of

Oscar's use of the word 'water' from Toscar's use of the word, then there is no need to account for the difference in the twins' grasp of meaning of the word (for their grasp of the meaning would be the same).

### §1.1 Issue 1: Accounting for the difference in meaning

Is there a difference in meaning between the twins' uses of the word 'water'? Here is McKinsey's answer.

“Now, it seems obviously correct to say, as Putnam does, what the Twin Earthians call 'water' is not H<sub>2</sub>O but XYZ. Thus the word 'water' when used by us on Earth has a different extension than it does when used by our doppelgangers on Twin Earth. But then, given that a general term's extension is determined by its meaning, there must also be some difference between the meaning that 'water' has on Earth and the meaning it has on Twin Earth. The problem is to account for how this difference in meaning is possible, given the extreme qualitative similarity of Earth and Twin Earth.” (1987, pp10-11)

Here McKinsey notes that (a) each of the twin's uses of water has a different extension and suggests that (b) a difference in the extension of a term is sufficient for a difference in meaning of a term. McKinsey's answer to the problem he mentions is to claim that each speaker's use of 'water' must mention some *object* which, the substance water, and not the substance XYZ, bears some relation to. In order to see this point consider giving the meaning of 'water' in purely qualitative terms:

(DF1)  $x$  is water  $=_{df}$   $x$  is the colourless, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that fills up lakes, rivers and oceans and falls from the sky as rain.

The meaning specified by (DF1) is satisfied by both samples of H<sub>2</sub>O on Earth and samples of XYZ on Twin-Earth, thus (DF1) gives us the false consequence that XYZ on Twin-Earth is water.

Nor can appeal to the chemical structure help to yield the correct meaning of 'water'. Consider for example,

(DF2)  $x$  is water  $=_{df}$   $x$  is H<sub>2</sub>O

Although water is H<sub>2</sub>O, 'water' does not mean H<sub>2</sub>O. Moreover, one can be ignorant of the fact that water is H<sub>2</sub>O and yet still grasp the meaning of 'water'. Given definitions (DF1) and (DF2) look unpromising, McKinsey concludes:

"It seems that in order to specify water so as to distinguish it from what Twin Earthians call 'water', a person with no scientific knowledge would have to mention some object to which water, but not XYZ, bears a certain relation. For it seems that the only differences that would exist between water and XYZ, besides the chemical differences, lie in the distinct objects to which the two kinds of liquids would be related. Thus water, but not XYZ, is found in the lakes and rivers of Earth; water, but not XYZ, is stuff that we (the inhabitants of Earth) have experienced; and so on. Perhaps, then, 'water' could be defined by mentioning some particular object to which water, but not XYZ, bears a certain relation." (1987, p10).

One obvious candidate that may satisfy McKinsey's criteria is to simply say that the term 'water' has a referent that is completely exhausted by the ordinary contingently existing physical substance water and the meaning of 'water' simply is the referent. Thus, on this proposal, the meaning of 'water' just is its referent the substance water. Now, McKinsey, himself, rejects this option but this may be an option that is used by other philosophers we'll be considering who commentate on the McKinsey problem.

McKinsey himself says:

"it is counterintuitive to suppose that a predicate like 'believes that water is wet' would be [semantically] de re with respect to the semantic contribution of the term 'water'. For surely, it is possible to believe that water is wet even though it should turn out that there is no such thing as water, and no natural kind to which such stuff belongs." (1994, p322).

So, given that McKinsey has the intuition that it is possible to have (non-factive and stative) cognitive attitudes about water even when there is no such substance as water, he rejects the claim that the meaning of 'water' simply is its referent. In fact, McKinsey claims that the term 'water' has two meanings. The first meaning is its propositional meaning which just is its referent. The second meaning is its linguistic meaning, the linguistic meaning gives a rule which fixes the referent of water (and thus fixes the propositional meaning of 'water'). McKinsey's suggestion is that in simple non-cognitive sentences, like 'The glass contains water', the term 'water' only contributes its referent to the sentence. Thus, the proposition expressed by the sentence 'the glass contains water' is simply a function of the referent of 'water'. However, in cognitive sentences or predicates such as 'Oscar thinks that water is wet' the referent of 'water' drops out as irrelevant and instead

the linguistic meaning of water partly determines the property that is expressed by the cognitive predicate.

At this point one might reply: How has McKinsey earned the right to suggest that kind terms like ‘water’ have two kinds of meaning? Given the small fraction of McKinsey’s work that I have presented, I have not done enough to show that he has earned this right. In order to earn the right, however, McKinsey needs to reject *CPA* and the *Proposition Theory*, which is partly the task of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. So for the moment, for the sake of exposition, let us grant that these two types of meaning are possible.

So what does McKinsey take to be the meaning of ‘water’? Specifically, what does McKinsey take to be the linguistic meaning of ‘water’? In order to answer this question, let us say that a genuine term is a term that refers directly to, without describing a given object. For example, if the term ‘Earth’ is treated as a genuine term, then it refers directly to the contingently existing physical object the planet Earth. That is to say, in such circumstances, the referent of ‘Earth’ is completely exhausted by the contingently existing planet Earth. In such circumstances, the sole semantic function of ‘Earth’ in simple (non-cognitive) sentences is to introduce a referent into what is said by such sentences. Or put another way, in such circumstances, the simple sentence containing the term ‘Earth’ expresses a proposition that is singular with respect to the contingently existing planet Earth. For example, in such circumstances the simple sentence ‘Earth rotates’ expresses a proposition which is singular with respect to Earth.

McKinsey’s proposal is that we can account for the difference in the meaning of ‘water’ in the Twin Earth case by specifying that the meaning of ‘water’ contains an element containing a special type of genuine term (let’s call it a *distinguishing genuine term*). The *distinguishing genuine term* will be such that it ensures that only samples of the substance water and not the substance XYZ satisfy the referent of the word ‘water’. Here is an attempt to specify the meaning of ‘water’ using the term ‘Earth’ as a distinguishing genuine term:

(DF3) x is water iff x is the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Earth.

Since the substance XYZ is not found on Earth but the substance water is, then (DF3) serves to ensure that the word ‘water’ refers only to the substance water.

Note also that (DF3) has the ordinary contingently existing physical object planet Earth as a constituent and the meaning (DF3) would not exist unless planet Earth exists. McKinsey says:

“Let us say that an "objectual meaning" is a meaning that can only be expressed by use of a genuine term that refers to a particular concrete object. Such a meaning essentially involves a particular object, or has that object "as a constituent." For instance, if we identify the meaning that [(DF3)] ascribes to 'water' with the relational property expressed by [(DF3)]'s definiens, then this property would be an example of an objectual meaning that has the planet Earth as a constituent. What the Twin Earth case seems to show, then, is that there are objectual meanings.” (1987, p11).

Now, McKinsey, for reasons independent of the Putnam case, is not satisfied by (DF3). In the end he settles with the following definition:

(DF4) For any  $\phi$ , if  $\phi$  is a token of 'is water', then for any property **P**,  $\phi$  is to predicate **P** if and only if: there is a natural kind K such that in the actual world, the colorless, odorless, thirst-quenching liquid that we have experienced belongs to K, and **P** = the property of belonging to K.

Now the pronoun 'we' used in (DF4) to demonstratively pick out a group consisting of the speaker and other inhabitants of Earth. Thus the rule expressed by (DF4) is an objectual rule that essentially involves that group. The speaker's twin on Twin-Earth would use 'we' to pick out himself and the other inhabitants of Twin-Earth. So, the rule expressed on Twin-Earth, though qualitatively similar to the rule used on Earth, is a different rule involving a different group.

The morals of this brief discussion is that the Putnam case shows that, firstly, there is, in fact, a difference in meaning of the word 'water' when used on Earth and Twin-Earth. Secondly, the difference is to be accounted for by the fact that the meaning of 'water' is objectual in the sense of involving an ordinary contingently existing physical object or objects which water on Earth and not XYZ bears some relation to. Thirdly, if you are persuaded that the only significant kind of meaning is propositional meaning, then you might account for this difference by claiming that the meaning of 'water' on Earth just is its referent the substance water. Fourthly, if you are persuaded that there are both propositional and linguistic meanings, then you might claim that the linguistic meaning of

‘water’ is objectual because it involves a genuine term whose referent is completely exhausted by a contingently existing physical object external to the speaker.

## §1.2 Issue 2: Accounting for grasp of meaning

One can also view the Twin Earth case as challenging us to account for the difference, if any, in the twins’ grasp of the meaning of the word ‘water’. If the meaning of water must be objectual in some sense or another, then it would seem that the twins do in fact grasp different meanings of the word ‘water’. How should we account for this? It would appear that the thought experiment refutes the following version of Internalism about meaning:

### *Meaning Internalism*

Necessarily, if two persons share all of the same “narrow psychological states”, then one of the persons means something by a given word iff the other person means the same thing by that word.

Now, since Oscar and Toscar uses of ‘water’ have different meanings, given *Meaning Internalism*, Oscar and Toscar cannot share all of the same narrow states. Thus, the twins grasp of the meaning of ‘water’ cannot be accounted for by appeal to their narrow states.

However, *Meaning Internalism*, as it stands needs to clarify what is meant by a “narrow psychological states”?

One of the crucial claims required to show that the Twin Earth Case refutes *Meaning Internalism* is that the twins share all of the same “narrow psychological properties”. But is this claim correct? It would seem to be false for first person or de se cognitive attitudes (see for example McKinsey 1991b). For example, if Oscar possesses the property expressed by the cognitive predicate ‘Oscar thinks that he himself is a hero’ is classed as “narrow” and individuating, then Oscar will possess a property that Toscar will not possess. Why? Oscar has only thoughts about Oscar and has no thoughts about Toscar. Similarly, Toscar has only thoughts about Toscar and has no thoughts about Oscar.

Thus, using the Twin-Earth Case to refute the *Meaning Internalism* does not work if first personal psychological states are allowed to qualify as “narrow psychological states”. One might reply that first personal psychological states should not qualify as “narrow”. In order to evaluate this objection we need firmer definitions of a “narrow” psychological state.

### *Strict Logical Narrowness*

A property **F** possessed by a subject **S** is strictly logically narrow iff **F** does not logically imply the existence of an object o, where o is neither identical to nor any part of any of **S**'s mental states, acts and experiences and property **F** is not contingently relational.

### *Liberal Narrow State*

A property **F** possessed by a subject **S** is liberally logically narrow iff **F** does not logically imply the existence of an object o, where o is neither identical to nor any part of any of **S**'s mental states, acts and experiences.

Both types of narrow states are logically narrow in the sense that they do not logically imply the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects external to the thinker or speaker who possesses the state. However, the definition *Liberal Narrow State* allows that the state in question may be contingently relational. Thus the definition *Liberal Narrow State* allows that first-person psychological states, which are contingently relational, count as “narrow psychological states”. On the other hand, the definition *Strict Narrow State* does not allow first person psychological states to count as narrow because it does not allow contingently relational states to satisfy it.

We, thus, have two notions of *Meaning Internalism*.

### *Strict Meaning Internalism*

Necessarily, if two persons share all the same strict narrow psychological states, then one of the persons means something by a given word iff the other person means the same thing by a given word.

### *Liberal Meaning Internalism*

Necessarily, if two persons share all the same liberally narrow psychological states, then one of the persons means something by a given word iff the other person means the same thing by a given word.

The Twin Earth Case refutes *Strict Meaning Internalism* but not *Liberal Meaning Internalism*. (see McKinsey 1991b, pp146-56 for more on this). However, *Liberal Meaning Internalism* still faces some very difficult questions: Firstly, how can we account for the differences in the twins' grasp of the meaning of 'water' by appeal to only their first personal psychological states? In the absence of such an explanation, one might as well claim that *Liberal Meaning Internalism* is false after all. Secondly, how can the meaning of 'water' be grasped by private

first personal attitudes even when the meaning of ‘water’ belongs to a word in the public language and involves ordinary contingently existing public physical objects?

If one assumes the *Proposition Theory* it is possible to push the *Liberal Meaning Internalist* into an untenable position. In order to see this, let’s take an objectual meaning which might be drawn from the Twin Earth case. For example, consider,

(DF3) x is water iff x is the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Earth.

Now the mental state by which Oscar grasps the rule (DF5) might be

(O1) Oscar intends that: for any x, x is to be taken as satisfying is is water’ iff x has the same structure as the odourless, colourless thirst-quenching of that kind found on Earth.

By assuming the *Proposition Theory*, we are entitled to take the (non-factive and stative) cognitive state ‘intends that’ as expressing a relation between the subject Oscar and a proposition. Moreover, given the proposition theory we also take this cognitive state of Oscar’s to be individuated by the proposition which he bears the cognitive state towards. Now, the term ‘Earth’ in (DF5) is functioning as a genuine term with no descriptive meaning in the public language and its referent is completely exhausted by the contingently existing physical planet Earth. Thus, since the proposition which Oscar has the cognitive attitude ‘intends that’ towards in (O1) is a function of the referent of the genuine term ‘Earth’, Oscar essentially has a cognitive attitude towards or about the contingently existing planet Earth. Given this last result, the cognitive state ascribed by (O1) cannot be a private and narrow state belonging to Oscar because it essentially involves the contingently existing planet Earth.

Now, the last argument can be short circuited if we do not assume the *Proposition Theory*. Were we not to assume the *Proposition Theory*, then perhaps the cognitive ascription (O1) does not express a relation of a cognitive attitude between Oscar and a proposition and perhaps that attitude will not be individuated by the proposition (if any) that concerns the cognitive attitude. So the challenge for the *Liberal Meaning Internalist*, can be met, provided he finds some reason to reject the *Proposition Theory*. Since *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be used as an attack on *CPA* (which is logically implied by the *Proposition Theory*), one can



use *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to form the beginnings of an attack on the *Proposition Theory*.

On the other hand, if you accept the *Proposition Theory*, you might see *Liberal Meaning Internalism* as untenable. Hence, you might conclude that no version of *Meaning Internalism* is tenable and conclude that the Twin Earth case shows that one's grasp of meaning must involve psychological states which logically imply the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects.

### §1.3 Issue 3: Extending the moral to de dicto structured cognitive predicates

It is possible to extend the Twin Earth case to be not just about difference of meaning and grasp of meaning but to be about de dicto structured cognitive predicates and even to be about the metaphysical nature of mental states.

It is easy to see how the experiment can be about de dicto structured cognitive predicates. Consider the cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that water is wet'. As long as one of the views in the previous sections are correct, we'll end up concluding that the cognitive predicate expresses a logically wide property.

If for example, we think that the term 'water' has no linguistic meaning and only propositional meaning, then to account for the Putnam Case, we might say that the referent of the term 'water' just is the substance water. Consequently the de dicto structured cognitive predicate, on this view, is semantically de re with respect to the substance water. Thus, we might be committed to the following claim:

The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that water is wet' expresses a logically wide property.

We might take that property to be the property **Oscar thinks that water is wet**.

If so we might claim that:

The proposition that *Oscar thinks that water is wet* logically implies the proposition that *water exists*.

On the other hand, we may consider ‘water’ to have both propositional and linguistic meanings. But even when we focus on the linguistic meaning of ‘water’ the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘thinks that water is wet’ will still be semantically de re with respect to *some* ordinary contingently existing physical object but perhaps not the substance water. Following (DF4) the cognitive predicate could be semantically de re with respect to planet Earth. Or following, (DF5) the cognitive predicate could be de re with respect to the community of humans Oscar is related to on planet Earth.

Now if we define the proposition that *E* as we did in the last chapter (a proposition asserting the existence of some ordinary contingently existing physical object) it is easy to see that all the views I have just described are united on the following two claims:

*SE-Water Instance\**

The de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Oscar thinks that water is wet’ expresses a logically wide property

*SE Water Instance\*\**

The proposition that *Oscar thinks that water is wet* logically implies the proposition that *E*.

#### §1.4 Issue 4: A difference in the metaphysical nature of mental states?

Can we conclude that the Putnam Case shows that the metaphysical nature of the twins thoughts are different? Specifically, can we conclude from the Putnam Case that Oscar has a mental state individuated by the property **Oscar thinks that water is wet** and Toscar has a distinct mental state individuated by a different property (say, the property **Toscar thinks that twater is wet**)? Yes, *provided we assume CPA*. If we do not assume *CPA*, we’ll have to answer this question in the negative. Let me explain.

If we assume *CPA*, then not only will the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Oscar thinks that water is wet’ express a wide cognitive property but the property will also individuate with respect to the cognitive state it describes. For example, if the cognitive predicate expresses the property **Oscar thinks that *water is wet***, then this property will

individuate Oscar's belief. Whereas, given *CPA*, a different property will individuate the mental state of Toscar, perhaps the property **Toscar thinks that water is wet**, for instance.

If we do not assume *CPA*, then while the properties **Oscar thinks that water is wet** and **Toscar thinks that water is wet** may be both logically wide and expressed by certain de dicto structured cognitive predicates, those properties do not individuate either of the twins' mental states.

How do we decide whether or not to assume *CPA*? Part of the point of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is to force us not to assume it if we also subscribe to *PAI* and *SE*.

## §2 The achievement problem and travelling cases

If we accept *CPA* and the claim that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Oscar believes that water is wet' it is possible to construct so-called counterfactual cases. These cases are meant to put pressure on the view that a subject has "privileged" or "a priori" access to her thought in some sense.

Very roughly the cases go like this. Take Susan who inhabits Earth and thinks that water is wet. Susan could be regularly unwittingly transported from Earth to planet Twin-Earth as defined by Putnam and back again in a way that is unbeknownst to her. Now, after a sufficient time on planet Twin-Earth when Susan truly and sincerely utters "I think that water is wet" she'll express the thought that twater is wet yet everything will seem the same internally (or from the inside) to Susan. This scenario gives us the outline of the following argument (see for example Flavey and Owens 1994, Farkas 2008).

### *Achievement Reasoning Template*

(ART1) If S can know a priori that she is thinking that p, then S can distinguish a priori between the actual situation in which she thinks that p and a *relevant alternative situation* in which she lacks the thought that p [claim]

(ART2) There are situations in which S lacks the thought that p which S cannot a priori distinguish from the actual situation in which she possesses the thought [claim].

(ART3) At least some of the situations in which S lacks the thought that p which S cannot a priori distinguish from the actual situation in which she possesses the thought are relevant alternative situations to the actual situation [claim]

Therefore,

(ART4) S cannot know a priori that she thinks that p [from ART1, ART2 and ART3].

Note, firstly, that the argument, requires *CPA* to generate the scenarios which support one of its claims. With *CPA* denied, it would be open to us to deny that logically wide properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates such as ‘Susan thinks that water is wet’ individuate with respect to Susan’s thoughts. With *CPA* denied, we could claim that everything seems the same on the inside to Susan precisely because Susan’s thoughts are the same due to them being individuated by logically narrow properties.

Secondly, we need to get a grip on what is meant by “a priori” knowledge of thoughts in this example. Does it mean the kind of strong aprioricity that McKinsey is concerned with? Or does it mean something weaker? I’d suggest that if (for the sake of argument) we grant *CPA*, then the argument does threaten the strong a priori knowledge that McKinsey is concerned with since surely S would already know strongly a priori that E and, consequently, she would know strongly a priori that she is not in any one of the relevant alternative scenarios.

However, we did not need Susan’s elaborate story to tell us this, since *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, which involves no such elaborate story, tells us that if we assume both *CPA* and *SE*, then *PAI* (the capacity to know strongly a priori of the properties that individuate our mental states) has to be rejected.

Rejection of *PAI* is compatible with subscribing to some kind of weaker privileged access thesis where we have the capacity to know weakly a priori the contents of our thoughts:

S knows that p *weakly a priori* iff S acquired knowledge that p without perceptual observation or empirical investigation but may have made empirical assumptions. This alternative definition of aprioricity yields a weaker privileged access thesis:

*W-PAC*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If S is thinking that p, then S can know weakly a priori that she thinks that p.

Perhaps cases like the Susan switching scenario do not threaten *W-PAC* because a subject can simply make the empirical assumption that she is not undergoing any of the slow-switching scenarios like Susan's. This still doesn't end the discussion as one might reply that, even given *W-PAC*, allows a subject to make certain empirical, a subject still requires adequate discriminative abilities of the sort mentioned in claim ART1.

However, the question of whether *W-PAC* has any philosophical basis remains to be seen. In Chapter 1, I suggested that the Cartesian predicament supported *PAI* where a sense of strong apriority was involved. It does not seem to be part of that Cartesian predicament that the subject possesses knowledge of her thoughts, only if she makes certain empirical assumptions. So, the Cartesian Predicament does not seem to support *W-PAC*.

### §3 Burge's Experiment

Certain examples given by Burge (1979) are thought to have broader scope than Putnam's because they can be applied to any general term such as 'arthritis', 'sofa' and 'brisket' as well as kind terms such as 'water'. It is commonly thought that if Burge is correct then belief or thought ascriptions containing these terms will imply the existence of a speech community (of more than one member) which is logically distinct from the speaker or thinker.

Moreover, if we combine *CPA* with the common moral drawn from Burge's thought experiment, then we would also be forced to conclude that the metaphysical nature of the mental state individuated by such a property logically implies the existence of a speech community.

For example, suppose the cognitive predicate 'Oscar believes that arthritis is painful' is dicto structured and expresses the property **Oscar believes that *arthritis is painful***. According to the Burge view, the property **Oscar believes that *arthritis is painful*** logically implies the existence of a speech community. Moreover, if we accept *CPA*, then the metaphysical nature of the mental state individuated by the property **Oscar believes that arthritis is painful** is logically wide.

In this section I shall identify the arguments extracted from Burge's work that we might use to express this conclusion.

A rough and ready explanation of one of Burge's examples concerns a subject, say Oscar, who has a less than perfect grasp of the concept expressed by the word 'arthritis'. Oscar (correctly) believes that he has arthritis in his ankles. And, Oscar has become convinced that he has arthritis in his thigh and speaks to his doctor about the topic. The doctor tells Oscar that it is impossible for him to have arthritis in his thigh since, by medical definition, arthritis is an inflammation of (only) the joints. Oscar defers to his doctor's linguistic authority and stands corrected. Then, Burge asks us to imagine a counterfactual situation in which Oscar's entire personal history is identical to the previous case but except that the word 'arthritis' is now used by Oscar's linguistic community to cover any wide class of rheumatoid ailments of the joints, tendons, muscles and bones. So, in the counterfactual situation Oscar's grasp of the concept of 'arthritis' is adequate.

Burge points out that in the actual situation, up until the time his doctor corrects him, Oscar believes that he has arthritis in his thigh, whereas in the counterfactual situation Oscar has no beliefs about arthritis at all. In the counterfactual situation, the beliefs that Oscar expresses using the word 'arthritis' seem to concern a general class of rheumatoid ailment and not arthritis. Now, prior to correction by his doctor Oscar is internally the same in both the actual and counterfactual situations, and since the only difference in the situations up to that point is in Oscar's social and linguistic environment, Burge concludes that the contents of Oscar's beliefs are dependent upon his social and linguistic environment.

There are two morals one might draw from this case of Burge's. The first is that the contents of one's beliefs (or at least beliefs containing at least one general term such as 'arthritis') are dependent on one's social and linguistic environment. The second is that the general term 'arthritis' and perhaps other similar terms have logically wide meanings (in the sense that correct specification of their meaning logically implies the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects such as a speech community).

McKinsey (1993) suggests that the first moral is far too strong. McKinsey claims that the contents of one's beliefs are not *in general* dependent upon the social or linguistic community. However, McKinsey readily admits that the contents of one's beliefs sometimes – in certain special circumstances – are dependent on one's social or linguistic community. And, according to McKinsey, Burge's example shows that these special

circumstances are when a subject has an inadequate or incomplete grasp of the concept of a general term that is part of the belief.

In order to see this last point, consider a case where a subject has an adequate or complete grasp of the concept of 'arthritis':

“Consider Arthur, an M.D. who specializes in diseases of the joints and who actively engages in research on the various forms of arthritis. Arthur's grasp of the concept of arthritis is of course perfect. But in fact, let us suppose, no word for arthritis occurs in the language of Arthur's community; perhaps he has come up with the concept on his own, and prior to the publication of his research, he has not yet found an appropriate technical term to use for the condition. (Maybe, he thinks, he should call it 'arthrititis'!)

Arthur of course has many beliefs about arthritis, but let us just consider his simple belief that arthritis is painful. It seems quite clear that this belief would in no way be logically dependent upon Arthur's social or linguistic environment. But then, since my description of Arthur is clearly consistent with Burge's description of his example, there seems to be nothing about the features of Burge's example which justifies the claim that the contents of one's beliefs are in general dependent upon one's social and linguistic environment.” (McKinsey, 1993 p326).

Thus, if Arthur's belief that arthritis is painful does not logically imply the existence of a linguistic or speech community. We can conclude that at least when a subject has a complete grasp of the meaning of a general term such as 'arthritis' the meaning is not logically wide. Moreover we can conclude that in cases where a subject has a complete grasp of a general term, the subject's belief does not depend on one's linguistic environment. Hence, a qualified de dicto structured cognitive predicate such as 'Arthur believes that arthritis is painful and Arthur has complete understanding of all the terms involved' does not express a property which logically implies the existence of a speech community. Indeed, Arthur could possess this belief in a solipsistic universe.

What happens if we qualify the cognitive predicate in a different way, so as to explicitly hone in on a case where a subject has an incomplete grasp of the meaning of a general term. Consider, for example, the cognitive predicate 'Oscar believes that arthritis is painful and Oscar has incomplete grasp of the meaning of 'arthritis''. In this case, McKinsey would grant that Burge's argument may show that such a cognitive predicate, if de dicto structured, expresses a property that logically implies the existence of a linguistic community.

However, there is an interesting consequence of Burge's first case. Given the generality of the terms to which the term can be applied, it suggests that what is making the terms work is not the meanings of the words – the general terms – in question but the meaning of the word 'believes'. McKinsey suggests that the Burge case does show that there are two radically different conditions under which a subject can satisfy any (de dicto structured) belief predicate, even a predicate that has entirely logically narrow content. One way is to satisfy the predicate by having complete understanding of the concepts involved. Another way is for the subject to have an incomplete understanding of the concepts involved but the subject's lack of understanding can be made up for by membership of a linguistic community whose language contains a word that expresses the relevant concept.

Thus, the proper conclusion to draw from Burge's first case is that there are two distinct, and radically different, conditions each of which are sufficient for the satisfaction of the belief predicate. One of those sufficient conditions will require membership of a given social or linguistic community for its satisfaction. Thus properties expressed by de dicto structured belief predicates which can be used in Burge's example are disjunctive in form. For example, the de dicto structured belief predicate 'S believes that arthritis is painful' expresses the disjunctive property **either N or W**. Where **N** is the logically wide property which obtains when the thinker grasps all of the meanings of the terms involved and **W** is the logically wide property where the thinker fails to grasp all of the meanings involved.

Now the property **either N or W** is itself logically narrow, since one can satisfy property by possessing property N alone which does not logically imply the existence of a speech community.

However, the property **either N or W** is not supervenient on the believer's internal states, since in both situations in Burge's first case the subject is the same internally but in the one situation the subject possesses a certain belief and yet fails to possess this belief in the other situation. Moreover, these disjunctive properties, even though logically narrow, cannot be used to individuate any belief. McKinsey explains this well:

“while Oscar and his doctor might both believe (in Burge's sense) that arthritis is painful, the beliefs of Oscar and his doctor that would make this ascription true of each would certainly seem to be quite different.” (McKinsey, p331).

(see also Loar 1985, p105.)



According to this quote, although the disjunctive property **either N or W** may be expressed by the cognitive predicate 'believes that arthritis is painful', the disjunctive property cannot be the property that is used to individuate the metaphysical nature of the mental state of Oscar and his doctor, since if it was it would result in Oscar and his doctor sharing the same belief states. And, this last result seems counter-intuitive.

McKinsey's way around this difficulty is to qualify the belief predicate we are using. He says:

"Suppose the sentence S has completely narrow meaning and we want to use the predicate 'believes that S' to ascribe an individuating belief property to Oscar. We can do this simply by qualifying the predication so as to rule out the irrelevant disjunct. We can, for instance, say something like 'Oscar believes that S, with complete understanding of all the concepts involved'. Or we can say, 'Oscar believes that S, and he would believe that S even if the sentence(s) he uses to express this belief meant something else in his language'. By explicitly ruling out the irrelevant wide disjunct in Burge's belief properties, these formulations can ascribe properties that are not only narrow in Putnam's sense, but that also are supervenient on internal states and that individuate the beliefs ascribed." (2003, p331-2).

McKinsey further suggests:

"To be on the safe side, a defender of narrow content could adopt a set of new definitions for the whole range of cognitive attitude operators. For instance, we might define 'x believes<sub>N</sub> that S' as an abbreviation of 'x believes that S, with complete understanding of the concepts involved'. Adoption of such a definition is harmless, since if Burge is right, it provides us with the narrow belief predicates we need for purposes of individuation, and if Burge is wrong, the definition is just redundant and we end up with the same operator that we started with." (2003, p332).

McKinsey's official view is that Burge is wrong. McKinsey's view is that the cognitive predicate 'Oscar believes that he has arthritis in his thigh' is not de dicto structured.

Instead, McKinsey proposes that it is de re structured. That is to say, McKinsey proposes that the predicate is structurally equivalent to this structurally de re formulation 'As regards to arthritis, Oscar believes that he has it in his thigh'. McKinsey contends that his position explains at least as much as Burge's, he says:

"This hypothesis explains why it seems false to say in the counterfactual situation that Oscar believes he has arthritis in his thigh. For, in this situation, Oscar not only fails to have the concept of arthritis, but he also has no access to the concept.

In the actual world, he can refer to arthritis as "what doctors mean by 'arthritis'." But in the counterfactual situation, this mode of reference would pick out not arthritis, but a general type of rheumatoid ailment. Thus my hypothesis explains the same intuitions as Burge's.(1993, p333).

So the moral of this section is that the thought that claims that cognitive predicates containing general terms like 'arthritis', 'sofa' and 'brisket' are logically wide in the sense of logically implying the existence of a certain speech community, can be resisted in various ways. One way, which is McKinsey's position, is to claim such predicates are structurally *de re*. Another way, is to treat the cognitive predicate as structurally *de dicto* but qualify it so as to restrict it to expressing only logically narrow properties. Such a qualification might require adding to the predicate the clause that the thinker understands each of the narrow meanings involved.

## §4 Conclusion

I have outlined a number of ways of handling the experiments of Putnam, Burge and others. What I have been keen to emphasise is that for any of these experiments to have a bearing on the metaphysical nature of mental states one needs to assume *CPA*. But, of course, *CPA* is precisely the claim McKinsey is suggesting that we give up. So, the only time you'll catch McKinsey (or myself) assuming *CPA* is for the purposes of reductio in *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. And, given that *SE* and *PAI* are plausible, or so I shall be contending, then *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* forces us to give up *CPA*. In the next chapter, I shall be outlining the development of a separate argument which sometimes gets labelled as "McKinsey Reasoning". This alternative "McKinsey Reasoning" takes some of the material in this chapter to be about the metaphysical nature of mental states, because commentators on this reasoning themselves (tacitly) assume *CPA*.

## Chapter 3

In this chapter I shall suggest that there is another argument that has loomed large in the literature on the “McKinsey Reasoning” that must be sharply distinguished from the *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I shall call this form of argument the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* (hereafter the *B-B Reasoning*). Commentators seldom sharply distinguish *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* from *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* (see, for example Kallestrup (2011), Wright (2000), (Davies (1998, 2000), Brown (2004), Farkas (2008)). However, I shall suggest that there are quite radical differences between the two types of reasoning. Moreover, those who claim to be commenting on “McKinsey Reasoning” tend to, in the bottom, have *B-B Reasoning* in mind. However, I shall be suggesting that it is really *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* which these commentators should have cause to worry about. This is, in part, because *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is simpler, thinner, easier to understand than *B-B Reasoning*. Moreover, each claim of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* has good motivation in the history of philosophy; and this is not obviously the case with the main claims the *B-B Reasoning* is concerned with.

In §1-2 I explain the development of *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* and suggest that its source was a series of responses in the *Analysis* journal in the 1990s to a variant of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* that was compressed and lacking in presentational acumen. In particular, I suggest that the role of the crucial claim *CPA* had not been made clear and the notion of “a priori knowledge” ended up becoming confused and weakened. §3 is my best attempt at stating the *B-B Reasoning*. §4 Attempts to list some of the differences I can spot between *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the *B-B Reasoning*. §5 concludes.

### §1 McKinsey (1991a) and presentational confusions

The *B-B Reasoning* was developed out of a series of responses to one of McKinsey’s presentations of his argument in the *Analysis* journal in the 1990s. It is the purpose of this section to outline this particular presentation of McKinsey’s and some of the responses it received and to explain how, between them, these papers de-emphasised and, in some cases, ignored crucial presentational elements which need to be emphasised to aid comprehension of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

## §1 McKinsey (1991a)

It is important to emphasise that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be used for at least two purposes. The first purpose, which I have been emphasising, is that it can be used to show *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* are jointly incompatible. The second purpose, which I have not yet emphasised, is that it can be used as an ad hominem argument against anyone who endorses each of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE*. Specifically, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be used to show that anyone who endorses each of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* is committed to an absurd consequence. McKinsey (1991a) is an attempt to give an ad hominem argument against Burge (1988 & 1982) who is alleged by McKinsey to endorse *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE*.

So, McKinsey (1991a) seems to be emphasising the second purpose of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. However, McKinsey (1991a) does not present *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to the letter, instead it presents one of its logically equivalent (but, in my view, presentationally deficient) formulations. Specifically, McKinsey (1991a) seems to gesture towards the argument *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation*. Thus, the overriding aim of McKinsey (1991a) seems to be to gesture towards the argument *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation* as an ad hominem argument against Burge (1988 & 1982), who, according to McKinsey, appears to endorse both *PAI* and *LET*.

In addition to this under-emphasis of the wider philosophical point of the argument in McKinsey (1991a) there are a further several problems with McKinsey (1991a) which I outline in the remaining sub-sections.

### §1.1 Philosophical basis of the the claims in McKinsey (1991a)

McKinsey (1991a) does briefly mention the philosophical basis of the argument that it is gesturing towards. Specifically, at the start of the article McKinsey's interpretation of the Cartesian predicament and the strength of aprioricity required to support it is briefly mentioned without being explained in detail. McKinsey says:

“It has been a philosophical commonplace, at least since Descartes. to hold that each of us can know the existence and content of his own mental states in a privileged way that is available to no one else. This has at least seemed true with respect to those 'neutral' cognitive attitudes such as thought, belief, intention, and

desire, whose propositional contents may be false. The crucial idea is not that one's knowledge of these states in oneself is incorrigible, for surely one can make mistakes about what one believes, intends, or desires. Rather the idea is that we can in principle find out about these states in ourselves 'just by thinking', without launching an empirical investigation or making any assumptions about the external physical world. I will call knowledge obtained independently of empirical investigation a priori knowledge. And I will call the principle that it is possible to have a priori knowledge of one's own mental cognitive attitude states, the Principle of Privileged Access, or just 'privileged access' for short." (1991a, p9).

The above quote suggests to me that McKinsey is trying to characterise the *PAI* thesis.

Recall it says:

*Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbf{M}_i$ , which is individuated by property **F**, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses **F**.

However, the quote is also consistent with McKinsey's trying to characterise the *PAC* thesis. Recall it says:

*Privileged access to content (PAC)*

If S thinks that *p*, then S can know strongly a priori that she thinks that *p*.

Now, provided every de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form 'S thinks that *S*' expresses a property that is logically narrow (which is, effectively, a denial of *SE*), one can unproblematically endorse *PAC* and take *PAC* to be consistent with the Cartesian predicament. This is because if one's mental state  $\mathbf{M}_i$  is individuated by the logically narrow property expressed by a dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form 'S thinks that *S*' one can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property that individuates  $\mathbf{M}_i$  without making any empirical assumptions, since she could possess such a property in a solipsistic world. Of course, someone who endorses such a picture owes us an explanation as to why every de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form 'S thinks that *S*' expresses a logically narrow property. That is to say, a proponent of such a picture owes us an explanation as to why she would reject *SE*. Explaining why one denies *SE* may be an especially difficult task given the array of semantic evidence in its favour.

The upshot of the last McKinsey quote is that it leaves the reader unsure as to whether the Cartesian predicament described by the quote supports *PAI* or *PAC*. Some commentators on McKinsey (1991a) infer that it must be *PAC* – or a weakened version of *PAC* – which

McKinsey is proposing. But if it is *PAC* that is being proposed then the (contrary to fact assumption) *CPA* is not being explicitly stated. The reader is just left to assume that every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses an individuating property.

## §1.2 Confusion over the role of deduction

Note that I have stressed that McKinsey (1991a) “gestures towards the argument *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning LET Variation*” it does not outright *sharply state* the argument. In particular, at no point does it mention the argument’s reliance on the meta-closure principle *CA*. The paper’s failure to mention this does leave the reader room to misinterpret the structure of the argument.

Another related issue which may add to the reader’s confusion over the structure of the argument gestured towards in McKinsey (1991a) is the mention of the subject in the example, Oscar, having the ability to perform a certain deduction:

“(2b) The proposition that Oscar is thinking that water is wet conceptually implies E,

and it is easy to see that (1),(2b), and (3) form an inconsistent triad.

The argument is this. Suppose (1) that Oscar knows a priori that he is thinking that water is wet. Then by (2b), Oscar can simply deduce E, using only premisses that are knowable a priori, including the premiss that he is thinking that water is wet. Since Oscar can deduce E from premisses that are knowable a priori, Oscar can know E itself a priori. But this contradicts (3), the assumption that E cannot be known a priori. Hence (1), (2b), and (3) are inconsistent. And so in general, it seems, anti-individualism is inconsistent with privileged access.” (1991a, p15).

In the quote above it looks as though the argument being gestured towards takes Oscar’s performing the deduction – or being able to perform the deduction – as a necessary premise required to take us from the claim “Oscar can know strongly a priori that *water is wet*” to the claim “Oscar can know strongly a priori that *E*” where the proposition that *E* concerns the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects.

Now, given my interpretation of “McKinsey Reasoning” as *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I clearly show that it is only the instance of the meta-closure principle *CA* which is required for the soundness of the argument. Stories of a subject performing a certain deduction (or being able to perform a certain deduction), while they may be consistent with *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* are not a claim required by it.

### §1.3 Narrow focus on one term – the kind term ‘water’

McKinsey (1991a) focuses on only one example of the de dicto structured cognitive predicates which express properties that individuate with respect to the cognitive states they describe (this of course must require the contrary to fact assumption *CP4*). It focuses on a cognitive predicate involving the kind term ‘water’. I think that the kind term ‘water’ is one of the trickiest predicates to use to explain *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and its variations (see Chapters 2, 8 and 9 for more on this).

Part of the reason as to why I think such a term is tricky is that, in my view, I think, in agreement with McKinsey, that kind terms such as ‘water’ have two kinds of meaning: linguistic meaning and propositional meaning. The propositional meaning simply is the referent of the term ‘water’. However, the linguistic meaning of the term ‘water’ involves a tricky and tortuous discussion which I have tried to outline in the previous chapter.

I think the linguistic meaning of ‘water’ does contain a descriptive element but it is not completely exhausted by that descriptive element (see Chapters 2, 8 & 10). This is because, on my view, the meaning of the term ‘water’ contains yet another element: a non-descriptive element that consists of a genuine term whose referent is completely exhausted by a contingently existing ordinary physical object. I think it would have been better for McKinsey (1991a) to consider the simpler cases of cognitive predicates containing terms that have no descriptive element at all but merely has a referent which is completely exhausted by an ordinary contingently existing physical object.

For example, the cognitive predicates ‘Oscar thinks that that man is rich’ or ‘Oscar thinks that Sergei is rich’(where the terms ‘that man’ and ‘Sergei’ have no descriptive meaning in the public language and who have referents that are completely exhausted by contingently existing ordinary physical objects) would, in my view, have helped to give more reader friendly examples.

So, again, McKinsey (1991a)’s focus on a cognitive predicate containing a kind term, in my view, make life much harder than it should be for the reader. However, in the previous chapters, I have tried to give a very general formulation of the logical wideness of the properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates involving the kind term

‘water’ which cover some of the various explanations of the logical wideness. McKinsey, himself, also uses such a formulation in his (1991a).

## §1.4 No mention of CPA

The presentational problems I have mentioned so far are enough to throw a diligent reader way off course when trying to reconstruct the structure of the argument in McKinsey (1991a). But I have, so far, not mentioned what I see as the most glaring presentational error of McKinsey (1991a) – its suppression of the *CPA* thesis. The *CPA* thesis has to be used to transition one from mere externalism about de dicto structured cognitive predicates (that is semantic externalism, *SE*) to externalism about the metaphysical nature of mental content (that is, logical externalism about thought content *LET*). What McKinsey (1991a) has done is just to present *LET*. He says:

“Some neutral cognitive states that are ascribed by de dicto attitude sentences (e.g., 'Oscar is thinking that water is wet') conceptually imply the existence of objects external to the person to whom the state is ascribed.” (1991a, p15).

Jumping straight to the *LET* thesis is fine as far as constructing a quick incompatibility argument goes but it does not make it easy for the reader to see the variety of options in responding to the argument. In particular, it does not make it easy for the reader to see that rejecting *CPA*, allows us to hold onto both the Cartesian intuitions in favour of *PAI* and the various semantic intuitions we have in favour of *SE* and its instances.

As noted earlier, *CPA* is the consequence of the *Proposition Theory* which is a deeply entrenched view in philosophy of mind and language. As the *Proposition Theory* is so deeply entrenched it may be that some philosophers are inclined to tacitly assume it. Regarding *CPA* and the *Proposition Theory*, it may be that McKinsey’s audience may not *consciously or explicitly* subscribe to these claims but instead they may well simply *tacitly* subscribe to them. So, these commentators may be reading over McKinsey’s (1991a) and completely miss one of the points it is trying to make. The point in question being that there is a seeming conflict between the Cartesian predicament, semantic externalism and the view that every de dicto structured cognitive predicates express an individuating property (i.e. *CPA*). They’ll miss the point because (a) they may be tacitly subscribing to *CPA* while they are reading it and (b) there is nothing in that (1991a) paper to draw their attention to the fact that *CPA* might be at least partly responsible for the absurd conclusion suggested by some of the reasoning in the paper.



Thus, the very audience that McKinsey wants to strike right of the heart of – in the sense of forcing them to reconsider their deeply entrenched views about *CPA* – may end up being completely and utterly dialectically untouched by his (1991a) paper!

Now, the way of dealing with those who tacitly assume *CPA*, in my view, is to present “McKinsey Reasoning” in such a way that it explicitly emphasises the role of *CPA*. In my view, this presentational strategy encourages those who might tacitly assume *CPA* to consider very carefully whether their assumption is correct. Unfortunately, McKinsey (1991a) does not use this presentational strategy. I have offered a presentational strategy in Chapter 1 which explicitly emphasises the role of *CPA* and its origin.

So, to summarise (in reverse order) McKinsey (1991a) has at least five presentational defects in my view: Firstly, it does not emphasise the role of *CPA*. Secondly, it narrowly focuses on cognitive predicates containing the term ‘water’. Thirdly, it may leave the reader with the feeling that a subject’s performing a certain kind of deduction is a necessary claim required by the reasoning. Fourthly, it does not emphasise the philosophical basis of the paradox. Fifthly, while it emphasises that it is giving an argument against Burge, it does not emphasise the wider philosophical role that the argument could play.

## **§2 Brueckner’s response to McKinsey (1991a)**

Brueckner’s (1992 & 1995) responses to McKinsey (1991a) took the main thrust of the paper to be the construction of an ad hominem argument against Burge (1988 & 1982). I can spot at least three interesting elements of Brueckner’s response to McKinsey. The first element concerns Brueckner’s discussion of “externalism” or “anti-individualism”. The second concerns the formulation of the privileged access thesis which Brueckner gestures towards. The third is Brueckner’s discussion of whether a subject can know that external physical objects distinct from herself exist. I shall comment upon each element in turn.

## §2.1 Formulation of “externalism” or “anti-individualism”

Firstly, the instance of “anti-individualism” or “externalism” which is the concern of McKinsey (1991a) is:

“Some neutral cognitive states that are ascribed by de dicto attitude sentences (e.g., 'Oscar is thinking that water is wet') conceptually imply the existence of objects external to the person to whom the state is ascribed.” (1991a, p15).

Brueckner suggests that (a) the implication in the quote above is weaker than logical or conceptual and (b) there is textual evidence to suggest that Burge (1988 & 1982) would endorse such a weaker formulation. Thus, Brueckner shows no signs of picking out the suppressed claim *CPA* as playing a crucial role in what he takes to be “McKinsey Reasoning”. Were he to have explicitly considered *CPA*, then he would have noticed that the thesis quoted above is, in fact, the conjunction of *SE* and *CPA*.

Arguing that the implication in the thesis above is weaker than logical is a curious position to take, since I take it that the proper moral to infer from the twin earth thought experiments ought to be that the meaning of ‘water’ and thus de dicto structured cognitive predicates involving the term ‘water’ are objectual – they *logically imply* the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects (see for example Chapters 2, 8 and 9). So, it looks as though Brueckner is denying this moral of the thought experiments and he does cite evidence from Burge (1988 & 1982) which suggests that it is right to do so. So, if Brueckner is correct, he may have shown that McKinsey (1991a) fails to satisfy one of its aims. The aim in question is the aim of presenting a sound ad hominem argument against Burge.

However, nothing Brueckner has said blocks the other aim of McKinsey (1991a) or my *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* which is to make the wider philosophical point that the Cartesian notion of privileged access is incompatible with certain forms of “externalism”. In order to see this, remember that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can be constructed against de dicto structured cognitive predicates that do not involve kind terms. Consider for example the logically wide cognitive predicate that would be expressed by ‘Laura thinks that that man is cute’.

Would Brueckner really deny the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that that man is cute’ fails to express a logically wide property? If he does not, then one cannot

take the point from his paper that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and its variations are outright wrong or unsound. Rather, Brueckner's point is, at best, that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is restricted in scope, in that it cannot be used on de dicto structured cognitive predicates involving kind terms such as 'water', and it cannot be used as an ad hominem argument against Burge.

If, on the other hand, Brueckner would deny the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that that man is cute' fails to express a logically wide property and denies the more general claim *SE*, then he is effectively denying one of the claims required to set up *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and its variations. In these circumstances, Brueckner could grant the soundness *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and its variations, and simply claim that assuming the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA* is contrary to fact because assuming *SE* is contrary to fact.

If *SE* is being denied, then there is still much work to be done. In particular, we are owed two explanations: Firstly, we need an explanation as to why the semantic evidence cited in favour of *SE*, in fact fails to support it. Secondly, we need an explanation as to why the properties expressed by de dicto structured predicates must be logically narrow.

The crucial question is: would Brueckner deny *SE* or simply deny only particular instances of it (instances involving the kind term 'water' for example)? Frustratingly, the *Analysis* journal debate in the 1990s sheds no light on this question, since McKinsey (1991a) and its commentaries tended to focus on the kind term 'water'. Thus debating over the logical versus the metaphysical or counterfactual wideness of de dicto structured cognitive predicates involving the kind term 'water' distracts our attention from whether other de dicto structured cognitive predicates involving non-kind terms are logically wide or not.

McKinsey's own reply to Brueckner is to suggest that in denying *LET-Instance* and instead backing Oscar's thought that water is wet metaphysically or counterfactually implying some proposition that E he is endorsing a trivial and uninteresting form of externalism.

Note that the Cartesian predicament allows that when a subject, S, can know strongly a priori that she possesses a given property **F** (which individuates a certain mental state of hers), **F** can metaphysically imply the existence of contingently existing external physical objects and this is the case whether **F** is a logically wide or logically narrow property.

In particular, if the property **S thinks that *water is wet*** is logically wide and S can know she possesses this property strongly a priori, it is also the case that the property might metaphysically imply the existence of contingently existing physical objects. For example, it may metaphysically imply that S has a contingently existing body or that there exist certain sperm and egg cells.

On the other hand, if the property **S thinks that *water is wet*** is logically narrow and S can know strongly a priori that she possesses the property, then one explanation of a metaphysical implication is blocked. This is because one cannot claim the property **S thinks that *water is wet*** metaphysically implies the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects because it logically implies their existence. But one can still endorse such a metaphysical implication by endorsing an *alternative explanation* of the metaphysical implication. Perhaps, for example, one might try to extrapolate a different metaphysical explanation by drawing on Burge's work as Brueckner has done. Moreover, one can still claim that S's strong a priori knowledge of the logically narrow property metaphysically implies the existence of an ordinary contingently existing physical object such as S's physical body or certain sperm and egg cells. But such a position is, of course, a "metaphysical internalist" or "individualist" since (what is assumed to be the individuating) property **S thinks that *water is wet*** is by assumption logically narrow.

Thus, Brueckner's claim to have saved "externalism" or "anti-individualism" from being incompatible with privileged access is odd. It is odd because an internalist about the metaphysical nature of mental states who endorses *PAI* can also happily claim that the logically narrow properties one has privileged access to are also metaphysically or counterfactually wide. Rather, Brueckner seems to have carved out an internalist position about the metaphysical nature of mental states regarding the property **Oscar thinks that *water is wet***. But this position, to repeat, is not to claim a variation of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is unsound, rather it is to claim at least one instance of *SE* (or *LET*) is false.

In response to McKinsey, Brueckner later suggests that the characteristic anti-individualist or externalist thesis in fact involves the notion of weak supervenience or S-wideness.

#### *S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a thought that p, then S's thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state.

But when we deal with *S-wide externalism* we get the same old problem back again. Does the *S-wide externalism* thesis really have any opponents? Consider a paradigm internalist de dicto structured cognitive predicate such as ‘Ollie believes that he himself is a hero’. Such a property is logically narrow since it does not logically imply the existence of contingently existing physical objects that are distinct from Ollie. But such a property is also S-wide since it fails to supervene on Ollie’s internal physical state. This is because Ollie, who shares exactly the same narrow states as his doppelganger Tollie, possesses a property that is not possessed by Tollie. For Ollie’s thought is about Ollie, Tollie’s thought is about Tollie, Tollie has no beliefs about Ollie and Ollie has no beliefs about Tollie.

So, no metaphysical internalist who endorses privileged access in the form of *PAI*, is likely to deny that many of the properties she can know she possesses strongly a priori fail to supervene on a subject’s internal physical state. If this is the case, then, once again, it seems as though the response to McKinsey which Brueckner is carving out is *PAI* combined with metaphysical internalism. Since such metaphysical internalism is also compatible with *S-Wide externalism*, Brueckner may label his position as saving “externalist” or “anti-individualist” but his position is a metaphysical internalist position for all that.

One final thought on the forgoing discussion is that it is taking place with *CPA* being tacitly assumed. For example, one can endorse S-wideness about de dicto structured cognitive predicates and properties:

*S-Wide externalism about properties*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a property P, then S’s thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject’s internal physical state.

Then, by tacitly assuming *CPA*, one can endorse an analogue of S-wideness about mental states:

*S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a thought that p, then S’s thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject’s internal physical state.

I myself (and McKinsey) am prepared to endorse most of these theses regarding de dicto structured cognitive predicates and properties. What I object to is then using *CPA* to infer a further claim about the metaphysical nature of mental states. This is because I think only

logically narrow properties individuate the cognitive state they describe and logically wide ones do not. However, since S-wide, metaphysically wide, and counterfactually wide properties are inchoate notions which include both logically wide and logically narrow properties, I cannot agree that, *in general*, these properties individuate with respect to the mental state they describe. For example, the property expresses by de se thought ascription is logically narrow and perhaps also S-wide, metaphysically wide and counterfactually wide but the property individuates only because it is logically narrow (see for example McKinsey 2002, pp212-7). On the other hand, the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘S thinks that man is rich’ is, on some views, logically wide, metaphysically wide, counterfactually wide and S-wide but it fails to individuate with respect to the cognitive state it describes *only because* it is *logically wide*.

## §2.2 Formulation of the “Privileged Access” thesis

Brueckner’s brief discussion of the privileged access thesis also shows no signs of recognising McKinsey’s formulation of the thesis, nor any signs of recognising the strength of apriority involved. He says:

“McKinsey understands a priori knowledge to be 'knowledge obtained independently of empirical investigation'” (1992, p112)

According to Brueckner, on Burge’s view, it is just obviously true that a person, Oscar, say, can know weakly a priori that he is thinking that water is wet. Note the weakness of the notion of apriority involved in Brueckner’s formulation of apriority. Brueckner seems to have in mind one the following thesis:

*W-PAC*

For any subject , S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If S is thinking that p, then S can know weakly a priori that she thinks that p.

Where S knows that p *weakly a priori* iff S acquires his knowledge without using empirical investigation as a justificatory basis but may make empirical assumptions.

Brueckner supports his use of weak apriority by pouncing on a slip from McKinsey, who at one point says does characterise apriority in its weak sense (1991, p9).

Now at other points, and especially the start of the article, McKinsey (1991a) clearly uses the notion of strong apriority. So, I am inclined to take the last McKinsey quote above as a slip or an instance of sloppiness and no more. Why couldn't Brueckner do the same thing? Why else might Brueckner be inclined to work with a notion of weak, rather than strong, apriority? My answers to these questions are only speculation due to the compressed nature of Brueckner's response. However, I suspect that it is due to Brueckner's tacit acceptance of *CPA* and adherence to *S*-wideness about properties. Let me explain.

Here is one explanation. The theses *S*-wideness and *CPA* generate alternative scenarios where everything is internally the same for the thinker but the thinker thinks different thoughts due to different *S*-wide properties individuating those thoughts. For example, on Earth perhaps the property **Oscar thinks that water is wet** individuates his mental state but on were Oscar to inhabit Twin-Earth for long enough the property **Oscar thinks that twater is wet** would individuate his mental state. Now, if Oscar were unwittingly regularly switched between Earth and Twin-Earth, there are arguments to suggest that everything would be subjectively the same for Oscar when he sincerely utters "I thinks that water is wet" but the thought thereby expressed would be different depending on whether Oscar is on Earth or Twin-Earth. So, Oscar must make the empirical assumption that he is not undergoing such switching-scenarios. Thus, the best account we can give of Oscar's knowledge of the contents of his thoughts is one which is based on his empirical assumption and this is underwritten by *W-PAC*.

Another explanation is this. Suppose *CPA* is true. Thus, the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Oscar thinks that man is tall' expresses a wide property which, given *CPA*, is individuating. Let's say this property is **Oscar thinks the singular proposition that that man is tall**. This property individuates a certain mental state of Oscars – call this state  $\mathfrak{M}$ . On some views there are scenarios where Oscar possesses some mental state which subjectively indistinguishable from  $\mathfrak{M}$  (call this mental state  $\mathfrak{M}^*$ ). However, when Oscar is in  $\mathfrak{M}^*$  the term 'that man' has no referent and thus Oscar's mental state  $\mathfrak{M}^*$  is not individuated by the property **Oscar thinks the singular proposition that that man is tall**. Yet each of these mental states is subjectively indistinguishable for Oscar. So that the possibility of being in mental state  $\mathfrak{M}^*$  does not undermine Oscar's knowledge of his thoughts, then Oscar will need to make the empirical assumption that he is not in the situation in which generates state  $\mathfrak{M}^*$ . Thus, such scenarios would prompt one to favour

*W-PAC* to capture the privileged access thesis over something like *PAI* because only the former thesis allows a subject to make empirical assumptions.

## §2.3 Formulation of the Environmental Access thesis

Brueckner also discusses whether a subject can know “a priori” in some sense that ordinary contingent objects external to her exist.

However, by “a priori” Brueckner means “weakly a priori.” Given Brueckner has weak apriority in mind, at this point, I am not sure what we should say. Is it obviously absurd that a subject can acquire a belief that *e* without perceptual observation or empirical investigation *when that subject also makes empirical assumptions?* It is not obvious to me.

Thus, this last point can be summarised if we introduce a sharp distinction between two types of environmental access theses:

### *Environmental Access*

For any subject, *S*, and any proposition that *e*, where *e* asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, *S* cannot know strongly a priori that *e*.

### *Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject, *S*, and any proposition that *e*, where *e* asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, *S* cannot know weakly a priori that *e*.

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* relies on *Environmental Access* as an auxiliary claim. Since I am defending *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I have to defend *Environmental Access* and shall complete this defence in later chapters. However, as a defender of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* I do not need to take a view on *Ambitious Environmental Access* and am unsure at this stage what to say about it; I discuss the thesis further later in the thesis.

## §2.4 Post Brueckner

Given the presentational problems of McKinsey (1991a), as well as some of Brueckner’s interpretations of the paper it is tempted to see “McKinsey Reasoning” as being concerned with the following theses:



### *W-PAC*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If S is thinking that p, then S can know weakly a priori that she thinks that p.

### *LET*

Many cognitive properties of the form **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p** are logically **wide** and individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe.

### *Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject, S, and any proposition that e, where e asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, S cannot know weakly a priori that e.

### *A priori deduction principle*

{If S can know weakly a priori that p and S can know a priori that (if p, then q) and S can simultaneously believe both that p and that (if p, then q) and S can competently deduce q from this simultaneous belief}, then S can know weakly a priori that q.

### *A priori knowability of LET Instances*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the logically wide property **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p**, and any proposition that e which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects: S can know “a priori” that her thinking that p logically implies that e.

Furthermore it was tempting to view the main thrust of Brueckner’s responses as being that we should deny *LET* and replace it with an implication between one’s thought and E being something weaker than logical. Presumably, this move would also result in the *A priori knowability of LET Instances* ending up false. The weaker “externalism” thesis that Brueckner had in mind was:

### *S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a thought that p, then S’s thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject’s internal physical state.

This way of seeing the debate, provoked a number of commentators to become “Brueckner-outsmarters”. That is to say they wanted to take the notion of “externalism” endorsed by Brueckner and show that when conjoined with a privileged access thesis such as *W-PAC* and further plausible auxiliary claims one can still derive an absurd conclusion.

If successful the “Brueckner-outsmarters” could show that, even given Brueckner’s claims, privileged access (understood as *W-PAC*) and an “externalism” which is concerned with an implication between one’s mental state and the external environment being weaker than logical were still threatened.

Before we discuss these “Brueckner-outsmarters” I want to compare the reasoning they are aiming to create with *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* had a clear target: to show that it is not possible to assume the conjunction of *CPA*, *SE* and *PAI*. Moreover, that target had a clear philosophical basis: Frege-Russell support for the Proposition Theory encourages us to accept *CPA*, the Cartesian predicament encourages us to support *PAI*, and semantic evidence, including that adduced by Kripke and Kaplan, encourages us to accept *SE*.

Now consider the proposed target of the “Brueckner-outsmarters”: It seems to be to show that the conjunction of *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism* are incompatible. They seem to want to reach this target by showing that the conjunction of *Weak-PAC*, *S-Wide Externalism* and a collection of auxiliary claims such as *Ambitious-Environmental Access*, *A priori deduction principle* and perhaps others results in a contradiction. Their idea is that since each of the auxiliary claims are true and plausible, it must ultimately be *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism* that are responsible for the contradiction.

I think the “Brueckner-outsmarters” have much to do in trying to pull this kind of reasoning off. However, even if they do pull such reasoning off, there is a more fundamental question to be asked: What is the philosophical basis for *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism*? Why should we be tempted to accept them in the first place? This is a question where the “Brueckner-outsmarters” may run into trouble on when they attempt to answer it.

It is worth making my point about the “Brueckner-outsmarters” in a slightly different way. Recall, the three paradox building stages I identified in Chapter 1: The philosophical basis stage, the target identification stage and the mechanical stage. It seems as though the “Brueckner-outsmarters” have their target identified: They are trying to show that the conjunction of *Weak-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism* are absurd. And, they may be able to produce much detailed work to show how the conjunction of *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism* (together with a collection of auxiliary claims they will suggest are true and plausible) results in a contradiction. Thus, they may be able to produce much detailed

work to support the mechanical stage of the paradox they are creating. However, what about the philosophical basis stage of their paradox? Why should we be tempted to accept the conjunction of *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism*? On this the “Brueckner-outsmarker’s” answer is far less obvious.

Now the reasoning created by “Brueckner-outsmarkers” seemed to have the upper hand in terms of the frequency it was discussed and mentioned in literature between 1991 and at least 2010 (see for example Kallestrup’s (2010) survey which focuses much attention on the argument created by the “Brueckner-outsmarkers”). Moreover, since the resultant reasoning was born out of McKinsey (1991a), it was typically labelled “McKinsey Reasoning” even though its true roots may have equally had much to do with Brueckner’s responses to McKinsey. So even if the philosophical basis of its target claims may appear to the reader to be dubious, inconclusive or unexplained at this point, I have to try and explain its mechanical stage because, otherwise, I won’t have the resources to cleanly engage with many of the commentaries on “McKinsey Reasoning” that occurred between 1991 and 2010.

Moreover, it may be that some of the responses to “McKinsey Reasoning” which was really directed at the reasoning constructed by the “Brueckner-outsmarkers” also has some applicability to the *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* that I am trying to defend. So, without further ado, let’s consider the arguments the “Brueckner-outsmarkers” are trying to construct.

### §3 “Brueckner-Outsmarters”

Bruecker’s response to McKinsey provoked a number of responses. In order to evaluate the overall effect these response we have we need to distinguish sharply between two goals. The first goal is heavily focussed on the mechanical element of the argument presented by McKinsey (1991a) and Brueckner’s responses. The first goal is an attempt to outsmart or sidestep Brueckner’s responses. The goal is to show that one can take Brueckner’s notions of “externalism” construed as *S-wideness*(or some kind of a notion of externalism that is weaker than logical), and some kind of notion of privileged access to content and still derive a seemingly absurd conclusion from these theses. Thus, if this first goal can be met, then, perhaps, Brueckner’s response is outsmarted to some degree and, perhaps, McKinsey’s (1991a) *ad hominem* argument against Burge will be vindicated.

The second goal emphasises the philosophical basis level of the paradox. The second goal is to maintain the philosophical basis of each of the theses at the mechanical level of the paradox. The responses to Brueckner seem to heavily focus on achieving the first goal. Consequently, the Brueckner responses run the risk of not meeting the second goal. That is to say, the responses may run the risk of producing some sort of a mechanically plausible argument with claims that do not have an obvious philosophical basis.

I have some sympathy with these responses to Brueckner: If they narrowly focussed on only McKinsey (1991a) and Brueckner's responses to that paper, then they may never have had a clear grasp of the philosophical basis of each of the claims *SE*, *PAI* and *CPA* explained to them. Therefore, they may never have viewed preserving the philosophical basis of the modified arguments they were creating as a priority, when they sought to amend the argument. There are two main lines of argument which have tried to outsmart Brueckner's response. One argument is given by Brown (1995) and the other by Boghossian (1997). Brown (1995) seems to rely heavily on Burge's (1979) view that general terms are in some sense "wide". Given I have suggest that this argument is severely limited in scope in Chapter 2, I think that Boghossian's argument has the best chance of being successful, so I shall pretty much simply focus upon his argument.

#### *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*

##### *W-PAC*

For any subject, *S*, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If *S* is thinking that *p*, then *S* can know weakly a priori that she thinks that *p*.

##### *S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, *S*, possesses a thought that *p*, then *S*'s thought that *p* fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state.

##### *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances*

For any subject, *S*, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p** and such properties fail to weakly supervene upon a subject's internal physical state, and any proposition that *e* which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects: *S* can know "a priori" that if she thinks that *p* then *e*.

### *Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject, *S*, and any proposition that *e*, where *e* asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from *S*, *S* cannot know weakly a priori that *e*.

### *A priori deduction principle*

{If *S* can know weakly a priori that *p* and *S* can know a priori that (if *p*, then *q*) and *S* can simultaneously believe both that *p* and that (if *p*, then *q*) and *S* can competently deduce *q* from this simultaneous belief}, then *S* can know weakly a priori that *q*.

Now consider a case where the thought Oscar is thinking that water is wet is *S*-wide:

(BB0) Oscar thinks that water is wet [assumption].

(BB1) Oscar can know weakly a priori that he thinks that water is wet [from BB0 & *W-PAC*]

(BB3) Oscar can know a priori that {if he thinks that water is wet, then *E*} [*A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances*]

(BB4) Oscar can believe both that {he is thinking that water is wet} and {if he thinks that water is wet, then *E*} simultaneously and can competently deduce *E* from these beliefs [claim]

Therefore,

(BB5) Oscar can know a priori that *E* [from BB1, BB2, BB3 & BB4 and *A priori deduction principle*].

But,

(BB6) Oscar cannot know weakly a priori that *E* [from *Ambitious Environmental Access*].

Therefore,

(BB7) Oscar both can and cannot know a priori that *E* [from BB6 & BB5].

The idea of the Boghossian-Brown Reasoning is that claims (BB6), (BB2), (BB4) and (BB0) are true. Thus, leaving claims (BB1) and (BB3) as the obvious culprits for the absurd conclusion (BB7). Thus, *W-PAC*, *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* sanctioning (BB3) and the truth of the externalist thesis in (BB3) seem to be the culprits. The proponent of the *B-B Reasoning*, may then argue that the externalist thesis in (BB3) is a priori knowable, if true. Consequently, if these further claims are correct, the culprits for the absurd conclusion (BB7) look to be the *W-PAC* thesis and the *S-Wide externalism* thesis.

There are many differences between *B-B Reasoning* and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and I shall try to explain some of these in the next section. However, the main difference to emphasise is that where *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* explicitly assumes *CPA*, *B-B Reasoning* seems to tacitly assume the thesis. To be sure, the assumption (BB1) seems to tacitly

assume the property **Oscar thinks that *water is wet*** individuates with respect to Oscar's mental state. However, as it is stated in (BB1), the role of *CPA* in permitting this assumption is not made clear.

While I emphasise a sharp distinction between *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*, much of the literature on these topics does not sharply distinguish between the two (see, for example, Kallestrup (2011), Davies (2000, 1998), Brown (2004), Wright (2000), Farkas (2008)). Moreover, proponents of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* attribute their argument to some of McKinsey's work and call it an example of "McKinsey Reasoning"! (see, for example, Boghossian p162, n2, Brown (2004)).

So, what explains the tendency of certain commentators to see the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* as some kind of an extension or elaborate form of "McKinsey Reasoning"? I'd simply suggest that these commentators have narrowly focussed on only a handful of McKinsey's papers – McKinsey (1991a) and perhaps also McKinsey (2002, 2003). However, I hope to have shown in Chapter 1, that considering a broader range of McKinsey's pre-2000 work reveals that a more accurate and clearer presentation of his argument is, in fact, what I have called *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

## §4 Traditional McKinsey Reasoning and B-B Reasoning: the differences

I wish to emphasise that we must distinguish sharply between, on the one hand, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and, on the other hand, the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning*. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* differ quite radically in a number of ways. In what follows I shall try to list some of those differences. I do not claim that I have provided an exhaustive list.

### *Difference in emphasis on CPA*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* explicitly states *CPA*. The *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* does not.

*Difference in target (where specified)*

The target of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is to establish the joint incompatibility of *CPA*, *SE* and *PAI*. The target of the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* is to establish at least a prima facie incompatibility between *W-PAC* and *S-Wide Externalism* about Mental Content.

*Difference over the kinds of externalism at issue and its basis of support*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is concerned with externalism as a semantic thesis about the logical wideness of de dicto structured cognitive predicates. This semantic externalism is supported by the semantic features of certain proper names, indexical pronouns and kind terms. The *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* is concerned with externalism about the metaphysical nature of mental states; the basis of support for this externalism is not clear but it may be from a priori or armchair reflection.

*Difference over the kind of privileged access involved*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is concerned with privileged access understood as *PAI* a capacity (strong) a priori knowledge of the factors that individuate with respect to the mental state one is in. The *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* is concerned with privileged access understood as *W-PAC*: A capacity for weak a priori knowledge to the contents of one's mental states.

*Difference in recommended resolution & post-paradox positive picture (where made)*

McKinsey and I would argue that the proper response to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is to reject *CPA*. Recommendations of how to respond to the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* are varied and sometimes not made at all (see for example Boghossian (1997))

*Difference over whether deduction is a necessary component*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* does not require that some subject have the capacity to perform some deductive inference as a necessary premise; the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* does.

*Difference (in some cases) over the strength of aprioricity involved*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, typically, emphasises a use of strong a priori knowledge; the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* does not obviously or typically require this (although it may be compatible with such a notion).

*Difference in commitment to a neutral free logic*

*Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, is committed to a neutral free logic; the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* is not obviously so committed. (See Chapter 5 for more about this.)

It may be that certain differences in features between *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and *B-B Reasoning* entail - or strongly suggest – a certain difference in another feature between the two types of reasoning. There may also be more differences between these types of reasoning that I have not listed.

My hunch is that a good many of the differences between *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the *Brown-Boghossian Reasoning* all stem from whether or not *CPA* is tacitly assumed. If *CPA* is not tacitly assumed and set out explicitly, it forces one to think of why it is true and how precisely to phrase the externalism that is at issue and the notion of privileged access that is at issue and why those notions enjoy the support they appear to have: Perhaps one would conclude that (a) the correct form externalism at issue is *SE* and *SE* enjoys support from certain interpretations of Kripke-Putnam arguments and (b) the correct form of privileged access at issue is *PAI* and it enjoys support from Cartesian intuitions. If on the other hand, *CPA* is not tacitly assumed and not explicitly set out, one can take the externalism at issue to be some claim about the metaphysical nature of mental content being externally determined in some sense and the form of privileged access at issue to be *PAC*; moreover, one might not have sound explanations as to why this kind of externalism and privileged access enjoy the support that they do.

## §5 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have set out *B-B Reasoning* and have suggested that it is radically different from *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I have suggested that the explanation as to why these arguments are radically different and yet still attributed to McKinsey and labelled



“McKinsey Reasoning” are due to various misunderstandings of McKinsey’s argument in the *Analysis* journal in the 1990s. In the next chapters I shall evaluate some of the claims that the two pieces of reasoning are concerned with. In Chapter 4, I consider the *Environmental Access* thesis and *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis. In Chapter 5, I consider instances of the meta-closure principle *CA* and the *A priori deduction principle*. In Chapter 6 I consider the *PAI* thesis and the *W-PAC* thesis. In Chapter 7 I consider the *SE* thesis and the *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* thesis. In chapter 8, I consider the *CPA* thesis.

## Chapter 4

In this chapter I shall focus on the auxiliary claims of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and *B-B Reasoning* which concern a subject's inability to know "a priori", in some sense, that contingently existing ordinary physical objects external to her exist. I shall conclude that the construal of this claim used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is untouched by the literature that might be thought to constitute objections to it. Regarding the relevant construal of the claim required by *B-B Reasoning*, I have two points to make about it: Firstly, we have not been given enough reason to accept it. Rather, it seems to have been frequently cited due to commentators having the goal of being "Brueckner-outsmarters". And, this frequent and uncritical citing of the claim may have given it some credibility. Secondly, some of the literature arguing against the claim, at first glance, seems quite threatening. However, on closer examination, I suggest that this literature does not present conclusive considerations against the claim used by the *B-B Reasoning*. Moreover, I also suggest that the literature has no import to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Specifically, I suggest that the considerations in the literature leave the version of the relevant claim used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* untouched. Thus, I shall conclude that (a) *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* remains untouched by any apparent criticisms regarding the construal of the claim it uses but (b) the considerations both for and against the version of the claim used by the *B-B Reasoning* are inconclusive. However, since my aim in the thesis is to defend *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I am indifferent to the fact the relevant claim used by the *B-B Reasoning* is not fully defended.

In §1 I remind the reader of the construal of the claim that concerns *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and sketch an argument to explain why it is plausible. In §2 I remind the reader of the construal of the claim that concerns *B-B Reasoning* and examine what support, if any, commentators of the *B-B Reasoning* have given to it. I suggest that these commentators have not provided sufficient considerations in favour of the claim. In §3 and §4 I look at two prominent articles by Sawyer (1998) and Brewer (2000) that might be thought to provide considerations against these claims. I conclude that the considerations offered by Sawyer and Brewer are not sufficient to rebut these claims. §5 concludes.

## §1 Environmental Access and Traditional McKinsey Reasoning

With regard to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* the thesis we are interested in is:

### *Environmental Access*

For any subject , S, and any proposition that e, where e asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, S cannot know strongly a priori that e.

Some instances of *Environmental Access* we have seen in instances of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* are:

S cannot know strongly a priori that *George exists*.

S cannot know strongly a priori that *water exists*.

S cannot know strongly a priori that *planet Earth or a speech community exists*.

Using McKinsey' (2003) definition, S knows strongly a priori that *p* iff S knowledge that *p* is not based even in part on the use of perceptual observation or empirical investigation and S knowledge that *p* cannot be undermined or outweighed by the addition of any additional empirical evidence.

The idea of strong a priori knowledge is that it is knowledge that one would have even if one were radically deceived as to the nature of the external world. It is knowledge one could possess, even if one inhabited a solipsistic world. The idea behind using this strong definition of aprioricity is that it characterises our knowledge of narrow properties which individuate our mental states. Specifically, a thinker does not need to use evidence concerning ordinary contingently existing physical objects external to herself in order to acquire or retain knowledge of the narrow properties she possesses. After all, since such a thinker could possess such narrow properties in a solipsistic world, it should not be a surprising result a thinker does not need to use evidence concerning ordinary contingently existing physical objects external to herself in order to acquire or retain such knowledge of these properties. This idea of strong a priori knowledge is rooted in the *Cartesian Predicament*.

When we attribute to a thinker strong a priori knowledge of the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to her, it just seems obviously absurd. But why? On each of the three formulations of strong aprioricity to which McKinsey subscribes, there is a clear answer to this question.

Consider McKinsey's first formulation of strong aprioricity as S knows strongly a priori that  $p$  only if S's knowledge that  $p$  is based on no empirical assumptions. When  $p$  is a proposition concerning the existence of ordinary contingently existing objects, then S must be making the empirical assumptions that such objects exist and that she is not in a solipsistic world. Since, were she in a solipsistic world or a scenario where no such objects exist, than she would not know that  $p$ .

Consider McKinsey's second definition of strong aprioricity as knowledge a subject could possess even in a solipsistic world. Would a subject possess knowledge of such an object in a solipsistic world? Of course not. The object in question wouldn't exist in such a world partly because the existence of the object in question is contingent.

Consider McKinsey's third definition of strong aprioricity. S knows strongly a priori that  $p$  iff S knowledge that  $p$  is not based even in part on the use of perceptual observation or empirical investigation and S knowledge that  $p$  cannot be undermined or outweighed by the addition of any additional empirical evidence. If it is claimed that S knows strongly a priori that ordinary contingently existing physical objects exist, then in order to simply retain such knowledge S needs to assume she is not in a scenario where no such objects exist but she is presented with evidence of some kind that they do exist. But such an assumption would be an empirical assumption, contrary to the definition of strong aprioricity just given.

So, I think that's all there is to explaining the truth of the *Environmental Access* thesis and making it prima facie plausible: it is simply the considerations I have given above. The arguments above are brief and only work if we are dealing with the strong sense of a priori knowledge. McKinsey, himself, does not typically *argue for* the *Environmental Access* thesis or its instances. Perhaps what I have said in this explanation explains McKinsey's behaviour: the argument in favour of *Environmental Access* is so short and almost self-contained in the definitions of strong a priori knowledge and contingently existing ordinary physical objects that we are working with, there isn't much dialectical need to labour over constructing an argument in its favour.

## §2 The Ambitious Environmental Access thesis and the *B-B Reasoning*

With regard to B-B Reasoning the construal of thesis we are interested in is this:

### *Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject, S, and any proposition that e, where e asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from S, S cannot know weakly a priori that e.

The typical instance of *Ambitious Environmental Access* we see in instances of the *B-B Reasoning* is:

Some subject S, S cannot know weakly a priori that *water exists*.

Note immediately, that *Ambitious Environmental Access* is not concerned with strong a priori knowledge. Rather, it is concerned with weak a priori knowledge: S knows that p *weakly a priori* iff S acquired knowledge that p without perceptual observation or empirical investigation but may have made empirical assumptions

Proponents of the *B-B Reasoning* rarely explain why we should accept the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis or its instance. Instead, they just take it to be obvious (see especially Boghossian (1997), Davies (2000)).

Thus, commentators on the *B-B Reasoning* treat the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis as a datum. That is to say, for these commentators there is no felt need to explain why the thesis is true or at least plausible. However, given that there are such arguments against the thesis, these arguments need to be engaged with, not ignored. Either those arguments will be sound or they will not be. Either way, they suggest that treating the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis as a datum is not the best approach.

What placed the proponents (or indeed commentators) of the *B-B Reasoning* in a position where they required the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis to be true and yet provided no argument for the thesis and treated it as a datum? I suggest that the culprit is these commentators narrow focus on McKinsey (1991a) and Brueckner's responses to that

particular paper. McKinsey (1991a) used a notion of strong aprioricity and, consequently, only required the *Environmental Access* thesis to be true. Now that thesis needs little argument to support it and, thus, perhaps it can be reasonably treated as a datum. So commentators on “McKinsey Reasoning” might claim that they don’t need to defend the claim S cannot know “a priori” that ordinary contingently existing physical objects exist because they are simply following McKinsey’s (1991a) practice of treating this claim as a datum. However, while such an excuse is understandable, it will not do. Let me explain.

As we saw in Chapter 3, while McKinsey (1991a) may have started using a notion of strong aprioricity, Brueckner soon shifted the focus of the debate from that notion of strong aprioricity to a notion of weak aprioricity. This shift from a notion of strong aprioricity to weak aprioricity shifts the focus of the argument from requiring merely the *Environmental Access* thesis to be true to requiring the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis to be true. However, if some of these commentators are not receptive to that shift in the notion of aprioricity, then their belief that a claim like S cannot know “a priori” that ordinary contingently existing physical objects exist is just being treated as a datum throughout the whole debate is understandable. This is because their belief that the notion of aprioricity in play has not changed is understandable but false. It is understandable because, as far as I can see, no commentator has sharply distinguished between the *B-B Reasoning* and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* as I have done. But their belief is false because, with that distinction between the two types of reasoning in the open, once we focus on the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis we find that it is not obviously true and its truth does not follow from the definition of weak aprioricity.

So, already then, the case in favour of the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis is inconclusive. Moreover, there also considerations against the thesis. I shall discuss these considerations in the next section. I shall also consider whether the considerations against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis are also considerations against the *Environmental Access* thesis.

### §3 Sawyer's considerations against the Ambitious Environmental Access thesis

Sawyer (1998) presents, what appears to be, a case against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis.

She considers a subject who reasons using an argument similar to this one:

*Sawyer Argument*

(S1) I am thinking a water-thought  
(S2) If I am thinking a water-thought, then *E*  
Therefore,  
(S3) *E*

where the proposition that *E* stands for the proposition *that water exists or the subject is a member of a certain speech community*.

Sawyer suggests that a subject, Susan, can know each of the premises of the *Sawyer Argument* in a certain “non-empirical” way. Consequently, Sawyer suggests that Susan can thus acquire “non-empirical” knowledge that *E*. But, also according to Sawyer Susan cannot possess “non-empirical” knowledge that *E*. So we have a paradox. Sawyer characterises “non-empirical” knowledge thus:

“I take the claim of privileged access to be the claim that a subject can have non-empirical knowledge of at least some of her propositional mental events, where non-empirical knowledge is simply knowledge gained without recourse to external perception” (1998, p523 n3).

Thus, although Sawyer is not inclined to use the term “a priori”, it is clear that she has something like what I have called the weak sense of a priori knowledge in mind. In particular, her non-empirical knowledge while acquired without recourse to external perception is compatible with a subject making empirical assumptions during its acquisition and retention.

So it looks like Sawyer is going to comment on the *B-B Reasoning* and she does reference papers from Brown (1995) and Boghossian (1997) which suggests this. However, she also references McKinsey (1991a). With my distinction between *B-B Reasoning* and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* in the open, it is not obvious that her considerations will have any

import to the latter kind of reasoning; I shall address this issue later on in the section. For now, I shall consider Sawyer's argument against the *B-B Reasoning*.

Sawyer's way out of the paradox just described is to deny the claim that Susan, or any other subject, cannot know non-empirically that *E*. So it looks like Sawyer is, in effect, going to challenge the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis.

Sawyer's challenge starts by her asking us to focus on the instance of the "externalism" thesis in the *Sawyer Argument*. It says:

(S2) If I am thinking a water-thought, then *E*

Clearly (S2) is pitched at the level of the metaphysical nature of thought. It does not mention mere "de dicto structured cognitive predicates". According to Sawyer, the explanation of this thesis is that one's water-thought is somehow necessarily causally related to the substance water. Consequently, according to Sawyer, if Susan has a water-thought, then Susan herself or someone who is a member of Susan's speech community will have had contact with the substance water.

"There is simply no way a subject could ever have the concepts she does have without either the referents of those concepts, or other people existing." (1998, p531).

Sawyer uses the term "concept" to mean "thought constituent" or "essential component of a thought" rather than meaning (see Sawyer 1998, p530, pp526-7).

So, according to Sawyer, if a subject thinks a water-thought, then she will already have had some causal contact with a speech community or the substance water. Consequently, when a subject has a water-thought, that subject will already have the capacity to know that she is (or has recently been in) an environment containing the substance water or containing a certain speech community. Such a knowledge capacity will of course be a capacity for "empirical" or perhaps even "perceptual" knowledge.

Some "externalists" about the metaphysical nature of a subject's mental states may object to Sawyer's account of the truth of the externalist thesis (S2). They might claim that while (S2) is in fact true the correct explanation is not a causal explanation. Thus, the response



Sawyer is developing may have no appeal to “externalists” who reject her causal explanation.

However, while endorsing this causal explanation, Sawyer is also endorsing the non-empirical knowability of (S2). But this is puzzling. If (S2) is best explained by a causal explanation, as Sawyer suggests, then, since such an explanation essentially involves ordinary contingently existing physical objects such as the substance water or a certain speech community, it is difficult to see how (S2) is knowable “a priori” or “non-empirically” or “without recourse to sense perception”. One would have thought that only recourse to sense perception would allow us to acquire and retain knowledge that (S2).

Sawyer then suggests that non-empirical knowledge that (S2) can be combined with non-empirical knowledge of (S1) to thereby allow a subject to acquire non-empirical knowledge that *E* but only on the condition that the subject already had an “empirical” or “perceptual” way of knowing that *E* both prior to performing and after performing the inference. Thus, according to Sawyer, the subject is never in a position where she knows (or has the capacity to know) that *E* non-empirically yet does not possess the capacity to know empirically or perceptually that *E*. She says:

“Of course it would be unacceptable to suppose that a subject could come to know about the external world just by looking inside her mind; that is, despite the lack of prior causal contact between that subject and the world, But instance arguments do not allow a subject to argue from world-independent facts to facts about the world, but rather to argue from the way the world is, via the mark the world leaves on her, back out to the way the world must have been to leave such a mark. Without prior causal contact, there is no concept available to introspection.” (1998, p532).

So, Sawyer is suggesting on her picture that the following situation is not possible:

(Single K-Capacity) For any subject, *S*: *S* can know non-empirically that *E* even without also possessing a capacity to know empirically or perceptually that *E*.

Rather, according to Sawyer, only the following situation is possible:

(Dual K-Capacity) For any subject, *S*: *S* can know non-empirically that *E* *only if* *S* also possesses a capacity to know empirically or perceptually that *E*.

It is not clear to me how an explanation that one can only be in the (Dual K-Capacity) situation removes the seeming absurdity of knowing non-empirically that *E*.

In conclusion I'd suggest that we are in the following situation. The considerations in favour of the *Ambitious Environmental Access* are inconclusive. But Sawyer's considerations against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* are also inconclusive. What I now want to consider is whether Sawyer's considerations have any impact upon the *Environmental Access* thesis and *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

Note that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* does not require a subject perform any kind of deduction. In particular, *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* does not require a subject to be running through an argument like the *Sawyer Argument*. Certain instances of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* do require that from certain auxiliary claims and the conjunction of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE*, it follows that a subject, *S*, can know strongly a priori that *E*. But there is nothing to stop a proponent of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* also claiming that one can know that *E* in some other way too. In particular, there is nothing to stop a proponent of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* from claiming additionally that *S* can know that *E* perceptually or "non-empirically" or "in a manner that is not strongly a priori". Even if the proponent makes such an additional claim, it is still the case that it is absurd for *S* to have the capacity to know strongly a priori that *E*.

Consider an analogue of Sawyer's claims held for the strong aprioricity of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

(Dual K-Capacity-SAP) *S* can know strongly a priori that *E* *only if* *S* also possesses a capacity to know empirically or perceptually that *E*.

Even if (Dual K-Capacity-SAP) were supported by an adequate argument, it still would not explain or mitigate the absurdity of the consequence that *S* can know that *E* in a strong a priori manner. Specifically, even if whenever *S* can know strongly a priori that *E*, *S* can also know empirically or perceptually that *E*, it is still absurd that *S* can know strongly a priori that *E*.

Thus I conclude that Sawyer's considerations cannot be imported to be used as considerations against the *Environmental Access* thesis used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

## §4 Brewer's considerations against the Ambitious Environmental Access thesis

Brewer (2000) also provides considerations against the claim that one cannot know that ordinary contingently existing physical objects exist in an "a priori" or "non-empirical manner".

Brewer asks us to consider the following inference:

- "(e1) I believe that p
- (e2) If x believes that p, then x's environment contains or did contain C
- Therefore,
- (e3) My environment contains or did contain C" (Brewer 2000, p428).

Brewer focuses on the case where the proposition that *p* is the proposition that *water is wet* and C is a concept such that C=water.

Brewer suggests that one could know that (e1) "non-empirically" and know that (e2) "non-empirically" and thereby come to know (e3) "non-empirically". The sense of "non-empirical" knowledge that Brewer has in mind is knowledge which is such that

"neither its acquisition, nor its status as knowledge necessarily involves any specific environmental investigation" (2000, p416).

Thus, Brewer's notion of non-empirical knowledge is compatible with a subject making empirical assumptions.

Brewer's (e1) is directed at the metaphysical nature of mental states rather than "de dicto structured cognitive predicates".

I would suggest that these features clearly show that Brewer is concerned with the *B-B Reasoning* and not *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

Some of Brewer's remarks seem to suggest that he is denying that it is absurd that one can know that (e3) non-empirically. He says:

“this argument cannot possibly constitute a problematic source of non-empirical knowledge: if its premises are true, then the subject already has the wherewithal to arrive at knowledge of its conclusion.” (2000, p428).

According to Brewer the subject already has the wherewithal to know that (e3) because the truth (not the non-empirical knowability) of (e1) depends on the subject’s grasp of the content ‘p’ which in turn depends upon his possession of the concept C. But, if a subject possesses the concept C, then, given Brewer’s views about concept possession, the subject will already possess demonstratively based empirical or perceptual knowledge that (e3).

Brewer’s view faces a similar difficulty to Sawyer’s. Specifically, it is not clear how a subject’s possessing both empirical and non-empirical capacities for knowledge that (e3) is supposed to show how a subject has an unproblematic capacity for non-empirical knowledge that (e3). Brueckner (2004) presses this worry. He suggests that for some propositions one can be “doubly justified, so to speak in believing (e3)” (2004, p43). According to Brueckner, one can possess both empirical and non-empirical justification for believing that (e3) and, consequently, one can possess the capacity to know that (e3) in both an empirical and non-empirical manner. But, according to Brueckner, this last result does not explain why a capacity to know that (e3) non-empirically is not absurd. I conclude that the remarks of Brewer’s that might constitute considerations against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis are inconclusive.

Similarly, Brewer’s remarks do not have a clear import for the *Environmental Access* thesis that is the focus of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Firstly, a subject’s performing an inference of the form (e1)-(e3) set out by Brewer is not a requirement or a necessary claim of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Secondly, a defender of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* can grant that a subject can know that ordinary contingently existing physical objects exist in an “empirical” or “perceptual” manner, while still maintaining that the reasoning also commits us to the intolerable claim that a subject can also possess the capacity to know strongly a priori that such objects exist.

## §5 Conclusion

I have suggested that the *Environmental Access* thesis, which is used by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, has support from simple arguments in its favour which appeal to the notion of

strong apriority that it is concerned with. By contrast, I have suggested that the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis, which is used by the *B-B Reasoning*, is typically not provided with sufficient considerations in its favour. However, the arguments of Sawyer and Brewer do not provide sufficient considerations against either the *Environmental Access* thesis or the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis. Consequently, in my view, the *Environmental Access* has been sufficiently defended. The case both for and against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis is, in my view, inconclusive. Now, since my aim is to defend *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I am indifferent to the fact that the considerations both for and against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis are inconclusive. As a defender of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, what I needed to defend only the *Environmental Access* thesis and I believe that my work in this chapter has gone some way to doing that.

## Chapter 5

In this chapter I shall evaluate the auxiliary claims of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and Boghossian-Brown Reasoning which are concerned with either a meta-closure principle or some principle of inference used to get us the earlier claims of the reasoning to the claim that a subject can know “a priori” in some sense that  $e$  (where the proposition that  $e$  concerns the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects).

There are quite a number of complex issues to be sorted out. I have argued that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* requires only that instances of the meta-closure principle  $CA$  be in fact true and does not require the claim that some subject have the ability to perform some kind of an inference or deduction. So the immediate issues I face are to (a) give  $CA$  – or the relevant instances of it which I use – some prima facie motivation and (b) defend  $CA$  – or at least the relevant instances it I use – from cases which might be thought to constitute counter-examples to it. I try to address these immediate issues in §1.

However, there are other issues that are the focus of this chapter that are far more exciting and interesting than a defence of (instances of) the meta-closure principle  $CA$ . Indeed, it is on these other issues where I have some of my biggest disagreements with McKinsey.

McKinsey agrees with me that only instances of  $CA$  – and thus no instances of a principle involving a subject acquiring strong a priori knowledge by way of performing a deduction – are required for the formulation of his reasoning. However, as we have seen earlier, McKinsey repeatedly prefaces and summaries his reasoning using precisely the example of a subject performing such a deduction. For example,

“Oscar can simply deduce  $E$ , using only premisses that are knowable a priori, including the premiss that he is thinking that water is wet. Since Oscar can deduce  $E$  from premisses that are knowable a priori, Oscar can know  $E$  itself a priori.” (1991a, p15).

These “deduction stories” of McKinsey’s seem to suggest that although he doesn’t claim instances of principles concerning a subject acquiring strong a priori knowledge by way of performing a deduction *are required* for the formulation of his reasoning, the subject who is the focus of his reasoning could, nonetheless, perform such an inference and acquire strong a priori knowledge that  $e$  in this way too. If this is McKinsey’s position, I am

inclined to agree with this claim of his too. McKinsey is, thus, committed to the following claim:

*Deduction Story*

If (a) S can know strongly a priori that he possesses the logically wide property W (for example the property S thinks that p) and (b) the proposition that W logically implies the proposition that e and (c) S can competently deduce the proposition that e from the proposition that W, S can know strongly a priori that e in virtue of performing the deduction.

However, when provoked by literature from Wright (2000) and Davies (2000), McKinsey makes yet more claims which seem to conflict with his claim *Deduction Story* (see especially McKinsey 2003 & 2002 pp210-12). Specifically, McKinsey claims, firstly, that there are cases in which a subject can deduce one proposition from another which logically implies it and have the capacity to know the proposition that logically implies it and yet fail to have the capacity know the deduced proposition by way of the deduction. McKinsey claims, secondly, that such cases occur precisely when the subject's knowledge of the entailing proposition requires the subject to have (justificatory prior) knowledge of the entailed proposition. These two claims together with McKinsey's explanation for the meta-closure principle *CA* commit him to the following claim:

*Anti-Deduction story*

Even if (a) S can know strongly a priori that he possesses the logically wide property W (for example the property S thinks that p) and (b) the proposition that W logically implies the proposition that e and (c) S can competently deduce the proposition that e from the proposition that W, S cannot know strongly a priori that e in virtue of performing the deduction.

The claims *Anti-Deduction Story* and *Deduction Story* conflict with one another. What is even more striking is that McKinsey sometimes even makes both of these claims in different parts of the very same paper (compare, for example, McKinsey 2002, pp210-12 with p200).

Am, I myself, committed to both the claims *Deduction Story* and *Anti-Deduction Story*? No. I claim only the *Deduction Story*. I reject the *Anti-Deduction Story*. I am able to take up this position because, contrary to McKinsey, I reject the view that there are cases where a subject can know each of the premises of a valid argument competently deduce the argument's conclusion from those premises and yet thereby fail to know the argument's conclusion. I reject this view precisely because the cases that provide seeming examples to support the view are, in fact, on my view, merely cases where a competent deduction is not

performed. I explain these issues in §2 and discuss their application to *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

So what I am considering is something like the following two principles:

*Strong A priori deduction principle*

{If S can know strongly a priori that  $p$  and the proposition that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $q$ , and S can competently deduce the proposition that  $q$  from the proposition that  $p$ }, then S can know strongly a priori that  $q$ .

*Deduction Principle*

{If S can know that  $p$  and the proposition that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $q$ , and S can competently deduce the proposition that  $q$  from the proposition that  $p$ }, then S can know that  $q$ .

To repeat, in §2, I am defending these principles from cases that are alleged to be counter-examples to them. I suggest that such cases are, in fact cases, where the antecedent of the principle is not satisfied and, thus, they do not constitute counter-examples to them.

There is also another element to the issues concerning acquiring knowledge by inference which relates more intimately to the work of Wright and Davies, rather than McKinsey. Wright and Davies' contented that their consideration of cases involving perceptual knowledge provides a counter-example to *Deduction Principle*. Moreover, Wright and Davies claim that the diagnosis of why this is so can be extrapolated to show that there are counter-examples to *Strong A priori deduction principle* and something like the following principle:

*A priori deduction principle*

{If S can know "a priori" that  $p$  and the proposition that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $q$ , and S can competently deduce the proposition that  $q$  from the proposition that  $p$ }, then S can know "a priori" that  $q$ .

Furthermore, when Wright and Davies, test "McKinsey Reasoning" against this extrapolated diagnosis, they conclude that "McKinsey Reasoning" is in fact an instance of the reasoning which uses a false instance of principle *A priori deduction principle*. Of course, given my sharp distinction between *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and *B-B Reasoning*, the crucial question for the Wright and Davies position is: What do they mean by "McKinsey



Reasoning”? There is clear and unambiguous textual evidence that they have the *B-B Reasoning in mind* (see Wright 2000, Davies 2000, 1998). Consequently, their claim that “McKinsey Reasoning” uses a false instance of *A priori deduction principle* leaves *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* untouched but may have an effect on the *B-B Reasoning*. I discuss the Wright and Davies position in §3. In §4 I discuss one of Wright’s particular applications of this strategy to “McKinsey Reasoning”. §5 concludes.

## §1 Defending instances of the meta-closure principle CA

In this section I shall first distinguish the meta-closure principle *CA* from more standard closure principles that epistemologists are used to dealing with. And explain why counter-examples to the latter principles will not also be counter-examples to the former kind of principles when the propositions we are concerned with involve a logical implication between the proposition *S* thinks that *p* and the proposition that *e* (where *e* is a proposition concerning the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects).

We need to distinguish between what I call meta-closure principles concerning a logical truth and standard closure principles concerning a logical truth. Epistemologists are used to dealing with the second kind of closure principle but I have rarely seen them considering the first kind in great depth.

An example of the first kind of closure principle is what I call a meta-closure principle:

*Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

I call it a meta-closure principle because its second conjunct is a proposition which asserts a logical implication between two other propositions.

An example of the second kind of closure principle is:

*Standard closure of the capacity for a priori knowledge across logical implication (SCA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and it is a logical truth that (if *p*, then *q*), then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

The last two closure principles above are related. In order to specify this relation we need to introduce a third principle:

*LT*

For any propositions *p* and *q*: If the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then (if *p*, then *q*) is a logical truth.

The relation between the three principles above is this: If *CA* and *LT*, then *SCA*.

Now, counter-examples to the more conventional closure principle *SCA*, are also counter-examples to *CA*, provided that the claim *LT* is true. However, on certain systems of free logic, which McKinsey favours, or at least favours when stating the reasoning I am considering in this thesis, *LT* is not true. *LT* is not true against a background of a neutral free logic. McKinsey says:

“Whatever plausibility (*LT*) has would seem to derive from a similar principle in classical first order logic, where if an argument from a premise ‘*p*’ to a conclusion ‘*q*’ is logically valid, then the argument’s corresponding conditional ‘*p*⊃*q*’ is a logical truth. However, the very same semantic facts which support the direct reference view of singular terms, the facts which support the truth of such externalist theses ... also show that classical first order logic is an inadequate tool for capturing the notion of logical truth in natural languages. These same semantic facts show that (*LT*) is a false, or at least a highly doubtful, principle about logical truth.” (2006, p448).

Against a background of a neutral free logic, it is rather trickier to construct counter-examples to certain meta-closure principles by citing counter-examples to its analogous standard closure principle because now we have the tricky task of picking combinations of the closure principles where the corresponding instance of the claim *LT* is also true. The problem is that whenever the proposition that *e* concerns the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects and the proposition that *S* *thinks that p* logically implies the proposition that *e* the corresponding instance of *LT* is not guaranteed to hold. McKinsey says:

“A genuine term is a term whose sole semantic contribution to the propositions expressed by use of sentences containing the term is simply the term’s semantic *referent*. This means that the proposition expressed by use of a sentence containing such a term is a *function* of the term’s referent in that use. This in turn means that use of a sentence containing a genuine term that *fails* to refer (in that use) must also fail to express a proposition. But a sentence (or use) that fails to

express a proposition also fails to *say* anything about the world, and so such a sentence (or use) has no truth value, that is, is neither true nor false.

I think it is clear that some of the genuine terms of natural languages at least sometimes fail to refer. But then the correct logic for (the first order fragments of) such languages must, unlike classical first order logic, be able to tolerate both failure of reference and failure of bivalence. The correct logic for such languages must in other words be a *free* logic. But in the forms of free logic that tolerate failure of bivalence due to failure of reference, the validity of an argument does *not* guarantee the logical truth of the argument's corresponding conditional." (2006, p449).

## §2 My view on deduction and Traditional McKinsey Reasoning

In the first part of this section I shall try to explain why a subject's being able to perform a certain deduction as central to one's grasp of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* even though it is not a necessary or required premise in the reasoning. In the second part I shall deal with some rather delicate issues concerning whether I can allow strong a priori knowledge of instances of the *SE* thesis that concern *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. In the third part, I consider some of the cases of the cases which are alleged to constitute counter-examples to the deduction principles *Strong A priori deduction principle* and *Deduction Principle* and conclude that they are not genuine counter-examples but cases where the antecedent is not satisfied. In the fourth part of the section I once again consider the case of deduction that is central to "McKinsey Reasoning" against the view of acquiring knowledge by deduction that I have proposed.

### §2.1 The Cartesian Predicament and Bloated Cartesian Predicament

Prior to consideration of *CPA* and *SE*, the Cartesian Predicament in the form of *PAI* alone allows that certain cogito style inferences could be performed. For example,

*Cogito 1*

I am thinking that I am a thinking thing  
Therefore  
I exist

*Cogito 2*

I am thinking that I am a hero  
Therefore,  
I exist

*Cogito 3*

I doubt that I am a hero  
Therefore,  
I exist

The general form of these instances might be described thus:

*Cogito-General*

I possess narrow cognitive property **N**  
Therefore,  
I exist

From one's possession of a certain narrow property, one can deduce one's own existence. Not that deducing one's own existence does not imply the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects external to oneself. Moreover, according to *PAI* one can know the premise of this instance in a strong a priori manner: One can know that one possesses a mental state individuated by narrow property **N** just by thinking and without relying on empirical assumptions. This makes one inclined to claim that when a subject does in fact know strongly a priori that she possesses **N** and competently deduces her own existence from her possession of **N**, one can also know strongly a priori that she exists. I myself, do not see anything wrong with such a claim. Given such a claim, we might also add that a subject can know strongly a priori that she exists in virtue of deducing her existence from a cogito argument when she knows the premise of that argument a priori.

Of course one can query these inferences and claims about ways of knowing in various ways. For example, one might ask: does one always have to perform such an inference to know strongly a priori that she exists. I would suggest not because I would suggest that an instance of the meta-closure principle *CA* holds true.

The relevant instance of *CA* would say that the subject possesses the capacity to strongly a priori know her own existence simply because of her capacity to strongly a priori know that she possesses certain narrow and individuating properties and such properties logically imply her own existence.

Note this last explanation does not require an appeal to *Cogito-General*. It might be that performing *Cogito-General*, is one way, and perhaps the first way, in which S explicitly recognises or believes (or in fact knows strongly a priori) that she exists but it is not the only source of S's capacity to know strongly a priori that she exists.

Is there a suppressed premise in these inferences? For example, is something like if “if S possesses property **N**, then S exists” suppressed? Given that I take the implication between S's possession of N and her own existence to be a *logical implication* I would suggest that something like “if S possesses property N, then S exists” is not a suppressed premise of the inference. However, I would also add that a subject could know strongly a priori that *if she possesses property N, then S exists*. Thus I would allow that a subject could reason in the following way:

*Extended Cogito*

I possess narrow cognitive property **N**  
 If I possess narrow cognitive property **N**, then I exist  
 Therefore,  
 I exist

Since the subject could know the premises of the *Extended Cogito* strongly a priori and competently deduce its conclusion from its premises, then she could *thereby* know strongly a priori that she exists.

All I wish to paint here is a broad brushstroke picture of how the Cartesian predicament looks when we are considering just *PAI* and ignoring *SE* and *CPA*. In the absence of *CPA* and *SE*, a de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form ‘S cs that \$’ expresses only a narrow cognitive property which may or may not individuate with respect to the cognitive state it describes. Now if we add *CPA alone* to *PAI*, then we only have reason to think the cognitive predicate ‘S cs that \$’ expresses only a narrow cognitive property which always does individuate with respect to the cognitive state it describes, so we still have not shifted out of the Cartesian Predicament.

On the other hand, if we add *both SE* and *CPA* to *PAI*, then we are shifted from the *Cartesian Predicament* to the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*. Specifically, in the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*, (i) the cognitive predicate ‘S cs that \$’ expresses a wide cognitive property **W**, according to *SE*; (ii) according to *CPA*, **W** is individuating; and (iii) according to *PAI*, S has privileged access to the individuating property **W** in the sense S can know strongly a priori that she possesses a mental state individuated by **W**.

For example, on the bloated Cartesian Predicament, the cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ express the cognitive property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute**. According to certain explanations of *SE*, the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute** is logically wide. According to *CPA*, the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute** is individuating. According to *PAI*, Laura can know strongly a priori that she possesses a mental state individuated by property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that George is cute**.

Now on the Bloated Cartesian Predicament, logically wide individuating properties get treated just like logically narrow individuating properties. Thus, one can engage in cogito style inferences using the logically wide properties as a premise. If we remember that the proposition that *e* is a proposition asserting the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects distinct from our thinker *S*, the general form of these inferences on the Bloated Cartesian Predicament looks like this:

*Bloated-Cogito Inference*

I possess wide cognitive property **W**  
 Therefore  
*e*

For a concrete example, consider the following instantiation of the Bloated-Cogito Inference (given the particular explanation of *SE*, I used in the previous example).

*Bloated Cogito 1*

Laura possess the property Laura thinks that George is cute  
 Therefore,  
 George exists

Since, on the Bloated Cartesian Predicament, *S* can know strongly a priori that she possesses **W**, and *S* can just deduce the proposition that *e* from her possession of **W**, *S* can know strongly a priori that *e*. Moreover, *S* can know strongly a priori that *e* in virtue of deducing the proposition that *e* from her possession of **W** and knowing that she possesses **W** strongly a priori. Is such an inference the only way *S* could know strongly a priori that *e* on the Bloated Cartesian Predicament? No. Recall, I have defend the view that an instance of the following meta-closure principle *CA* holds true:

*Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject *S* and any propositions *p* and *q*: If *S* can know a priori that *p* and the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then *S* can know a priori that *q*.

And one can satisfy this closure principle without having to perform anything like a *Bloated-Cogito Inference*.

For example, Laura has the capacity to know that George exists *simply because* it is in fact true that the property **Laura thinks that George is cute** logically implies George's existence (given a certain explanation of *SE*) and Laura can know strongly a priori she possesses the property **Laura thinks that George is cute**. Note this last explanation does not require an appeal to Laura's performing an inference of the form *Bloated Cogito 1*. It might be that performing *Bloated Cogito 1*, is one way, and perhaps the first way, in which Laura explicitly recognises or believes (or in fact knows strongly a priori) that George exists but it is not the only source of Laura's capacity to know strongly a priori that Laura exists.

## §2.2 Strong a priori knowledge of instances of SE?

Is there a suppressed premise in the Bloated-Cogito Inference? I would suggest not because the implication is a logical implication. Were we to have to write out every *logical implication* of every argument in explicit form then we may have a regress of the form:

If *N*, then *e*

If *N* and (if *N*, then *e*) then *e*...

Moreover, I have argued earlier that I would deny the following claim:

*LT*

For any propositions *p* and *q*: If the proposition that *p* logically implies the proposition that *q*, then (if *p*, then *q*) is a logical truth.

For example, I would deny the following instance of *LT*:

If the proposition that *N* logically implies the proposition that *e* then (if *N*, then *e*) is a logical truth.

Moreover, on my view just as the simple sentence ‘George is cute’ expresses a proposition that is singular with respect to George and the cognitive predicate ‘Laura thinks that George is cute’ expresses a logically wide property, the following meta proposition is also singular with respect to George:

(CA\*) The proposition that *Laura is thinking that George is cute* logically implies the proposition that *George exists*.

Thus, I would suggest that the meta-proposition (CA\*), cannot, typically, be claimed to be strongly a priori knowable because it is singular with respect to the ordinary contingently existing physical object George (However, see McKinsey (2003), pp206-210 for an extremely tortuous route to the strong a priori knowability of the truth {if Laura thinks that George is cute, then George exists}, given certain contrary to fact assumptions).

### §2.3 My view of counter-examples to inferential principles

Some commentators on “McKinsey Reasoning”, as we have seen, have claimed that the reasoning requires an instance of the following principle to obtain (for example Wright 2000, Davies 2000, 1998):

#### *Deduction Principle\**

{If S can know “a priori” that *p* and S can know a priori that if *p* then *q*, and S can believe that *p* and believe that if *p*, then *q* simultaneously and S can competently deduce the proposition that *q* from the propositions she simultaneously believes}, then S can know “a priori” that *q*.

However, in order for their claim to hold good, they must interpret “McKinsey Reasoning” to be the *B-B Reasoning* or something like it. Moreover, some commentators have claimed that the relevant instance of the principle *Deduction Principle\** used in “McKinsey Reasoning” is in fact false. That is to say, they deny *Deduction Principle\**.

The commentators reach this result by claiming that there are counter-examples to the more general claim, which sometimes includes cases of perceptual knowledge:



### *Deduction Principle\*\**

{If S can know that  $p$  and S can know that if  $p$  then  $q$ , and S can believe that  $p$  and believe that if  $p$ , then  $q$  simultaneously and S can competently deduce the proposition that  $q$  from the propositions she simultaneously believes}, then S can know that  $q$ .

If you take a step back to consider these proposals, they ought to seem absolutely striking: They are claiming that there are cases where a subject knows all of the premises of a valid argument competently deduces its conclusion from its premises and yet fails to thereby know its conclusion. If this view is correct, then, were it widespread, then a lot of what we claim to know “by deduction” might turn out to be wrong. Now, in response, the proponents of this view might suggest our failures to “know by deduction” aren’t that widespread but just apply to an extremely restricted range of cases.

### §2.3.1 The issues at stake

Since I am defending *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, which does not utilise the standard closure principle like *Deduction Principle \** and instead, utilises, a meta-closure principle *CA*, I would not accept the diagnosis of these commentators has any impact on the argument I am defending. However, since I allow that inferences like *Cogito Inference* and *Bloated-Cogito Inference* can be performed and can be used for strong a priori knowledge acquisition on the Bloated Cartesian predicament, it is still useful for me to consider any alleged restrictions on acquiring “knowledge by deduction”. This is because while such inferences are not essential to my formal statement of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, I am using them as being one way to illustrate the Bloated *Cartesian Predicament* created by jointly assuming *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*.

### §2.3.1 My view of a simple case

Let’s look at some of the cases which constitute alleged counter-examples to the standard deductive closure principles *Deduction Principle \*\**.

Consider,

### *Repetition Argument*

P  
If  $p$ , then  $p$   
Therefore,  
 $p$

Clearly there are cases where I know that  $p$  and know that *if  $p$ , then  $p$*  and recognise the validity of *Repetition Argument* and I can deduce  $p$  from the *Repetition Argument* premises. However, the intuition is that I do not *thereby* know that  $p$ . Everyone will also grant that I know that  $p$  because we asked everyone to assume it at the outset. But, the intuition is that I do not know that  $p$  in one specific way. The specific way in question is the way of knowing one possesses by deducing the conclusion of a valid argument from its known premises. So it appears we have a counter example to *Deduction Principle\**.

I disagree with this diagnosis. My suggestion is that certainly something funny or odd is going on in the circumstances described. I also agree that I do not know that  $p$  in one particular way. Specifically, I agree that I do not know that  $p$  by inferring the *Repetition Argument* conclusion from its (known) premises. However, my failure to possess such knowledge can be accounted for in two ways. One way, is by the standard deductive closure principle *Deduction Principle\** being false and admitting counter-examples. Another way, is by the standard closure principle *Deduction Principle\** holding true but at least one conjunct of its antecedent is not satisfied. What I am going to suggest is that what is funny about this case just is that its antecedent is not satisfied. What I shall suggest is that this particular conjunct of its antecedent is not satisfied in this case *Deduction Principle\**.

When a subject performs a deduction like the one discussed in our example, it is analogous to that subject having a conversation with oneself. For example, you can imagine a subject thinking or saying to herself: “ $p$  or if  $p$  then  $p$  therefore...”. Now, with this picture in place, I’d suggest that certain Gricean communication rules are in place even when we are making statements to ourselves. Two such Gricean conversational maxims are:

“Do not make your contribution more informative than is required” (1975, p45).

“Be brief. Avoid unnecessary prolixity” (1975, p46).

I’d suggest that when one thinks or says the *Repetition Argument* to oneself, one recognises that something seems odd and has stopped mid-way through the deduction or inference. Thus the subject has not, and could not, if she is sufficiently rational, deduce  $p$  from if  $p$ , then  $p$  and  $p$ . My explanation of why the subject, when attempting to run through the inference, recognises that something is odd mid-way through, is that she has violated one of these Gricean conversational axioms.

On my view does a subject need to be aware of all the Gricean conversational axioms in order to perform deductions? No. One cannot expect a sufficiently rational subject who deduces to know Grice's point about conversational axioms. However, when she is starting to perform an inference (or state an inference to herself) which is about to violate such an axiom, my suggestion is that the subject just does not complete it. At an intuitive conversational level, she realises something is wrong with the inference she is trying to perform and just does not perform it.

In giving my view I am helping myself to the claim that the subject is rational to at least some extent. Some non-rational subject of course might go ahead and deduce the *Repetition Argument* conclusion from its premises but I don't think such cases would be of interest to me or commentators on these issues.

### §2.3.1 A more complex case

Consider the following inference:

#### *BIV Argument*

That animal is a zebra  
If that animal is a zebra, then I am not a brain-in-a-vat  
Therefore,  
I am not a brain-in-a-vat

One common diagnosis of the BIV Argument is this. S knows the premises of the *BIV Argument*. After all, the premise "If that animal is a zebra, then I am not a brain-in-a-vat" is an obvious logical or conceptual truth. Many accounts of perceptual knowledge allow that S knows that that animal is a zebra partly in virtue of her visual experiences. What about S's knowledge that she is not a brain-in-a-vat? Does she possess such knowledge before performing any kind of inference involving the *BIV Argument*? One commonly held view is that S has to possess such knowledge prior to the inference, because otherwise there is a simple sceptical argument that will undermine her perceptual knowledge that that animal is a zebra. So, typically, one will claim that, prior to performing any inference involving the *BIV Argument*, S possesses knowledge that she is not a brain-in-a-vat. Now consider the question: If S knows each of the premises of the *BIV Argument* in the ways just described and S competently deduces that argument's conclusion from those premises, then does S thereby know that she is not a brain-in-a-vat? The common diagnosis is that S does not possess such knowledge. That is to say, the common diagnosis denies S knows that she is

not-a-brain-in-a-vat in one specific way. Specifically, the common diagnosis denies S knows that she is not-a-brain-in-a-vat by deducing it from the *BIV Argument*. However, the common diagnosis has to affirm that S knows that she is not-a-brain-in-a-vat in some other way in order to set up the scenario from the outset.

Now the common diagnosis just described, is meant to constitute a counter-example to the standard deductive closure principle *Deduction Principle\*\**.

I disagree that there is a counter-example to the standard deductive closure principle. I agree with the diagnosis that it is right to claim S knows that she is not-a-brain-in-a-vat by deducing it from the BIV Argument premises. However, this claim can be accounted for in at least two ways: Firstly, one can deny the standard deductive closure principle *Deduction Principle\**. Secondly one can accept the standard deductive closure principle and simply deny that one of the components in its antecedent is true. The view I shall be proposing is that the antecedent of *Deduction Principle\*\** is false.

I shall argue that *Deduction Principle\*\** antecedent is false because a Gricean conversational axiom has been violated; consequently, the subject never performs a competent deduction. However, the Gricean axiom I have in mind is a different one than in the last example. It is an axiom concerning only making statements that one has adequate evidence for. In order to show how the requirement is relevant to this case, I need to make a quick detour into consideration of the sceptical argument and Internalism-externalism debate in epistemology which is fuelling our initial set up of the case under consideration.

A rough and ready outline of the sceptical argument that threatens one's perceptual knowledge that that animal is a zebra is this:

#### *Sceptical Argument*

(SA1) S does not know that she is not a brain-in-a-vat [claim]

(SA2) S knows that if that animal is a zebra, then she is not a brain-in-a-vat [claim]

(SA3) If {S knows that animal is a zebra and S knows that if that animal is a zebra, then she is not a brain-in-a-vat}, then S knows that she is not a brain-in-a-vat. [claim]

Therefore,

(SA4) S does not know that animal is a zebra [from SA1, SA2 and SA3]

How does one resist the conclusion of the sceptical argument (SA4) and thus preserve the materials needed to set up our problem involving the *BIV Argument*? The strategy used by those who set up problems like the *BIV Argument* is to grant the sceptic claims (SA2) and

(SA3). However, they question the claim (SA1). Specifically they'll say that another argument lies behind (SA1) which uses a false premise.

*Evidential Constraint Argument*

(ECA1) S does not possess adequate evidence for the proposition that that animal is a zebra.  
(ECA2) For any proposition that *p* or at least any proposition about the external environment that *p*: If S knows that *p*, then S possesses adequate evidence for the proposition that *p*.  
Therefore,  
(SA1) S does not know that she is not a brain-in-a-vat [from ECA1 and ECA2]

They'll grant (ECA1). But they'll allege that the claim (ECA2) is false. That is to say they reject the claim that *all cases* of propositional knowledge are constrained by a subject possessing adequate evidence. Their rejection of (ECA2) is compatible with their also claiming that possessing adequate evidence is still central to many cases of propositional knowledge. They'll simply deny that possessing adequate evidence is necessary for possession of propositional knowledge.

Thus, those who reject (ECA2) are committed to a certain form of epistemological externalism. If we say that when a subject, S, possesses adequate evidence for the proposition that *p*, S has sufficiently reflective access to the factors that make it the case that S knows that *p* (rather than truly believes that *p*), we can formulate epistemological internalism thus:

(EIK) A necessary condition on S's knowledge that *p* is that all epistemic factors relevant to S's knowledge (as opposed to merely true belief) that *p* are reflectively accessible to S.

(cf. Kallestrup & Pritchard 2004, p346-7).

The denial of (EIK) is epistemological externalism. Note that an epistemological externalist can still claim that in some (or many) cases a subject who knows that *p* has sufficiently reflective access to the factors that make it the case she possesses knowledge (rather than true belief) and possesses adequate evidence for the proposition that *p*. What the epistemological externalist denies is that all such cases of knowledge require such reflective access and evidence possession.

Now, my suggestion is that the set-up of the problem concerning the BIV Argument, requires epistemological externalism to be true. Specifically, my suggestion is that if S knows that she is not a brain-in-a-vat at the outset (prior to performing any alleged

inference), S's knowledge must be such that S does not possess adequate evidence for the proposition that she is not a brain-in-a-vat and S does not have sufficiently reflective access to the factors that make it the case that she possesses such knowledge (cf. Zalabardo (forthcoming, 2009, 2005)).

My suggestion is also that when she possesses knowledge that that animal is a zebra, S does possess adequate evidence for the proposition that that animal is a zebra. For example, S has her visual experience as of a zebra and she knows that certain scenarios involving fake zebras and the like are farfetched. Similarly, S does possess sufficiently reflective access to the factors that make it the case that she knows that that animal is a zebra.

Now consider S attempting to perform the inference. Imagine S saying or thinking to herself "that animal is a zebra, if that animal is a zebra, then I am not a brain-in-a-vat....". Does S complete the inference? I would suggest not. I would suggest that there is condition on S performing the deduction which is analogous to the following Gricean conversational axiom:

"Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence." (1975, p46).

In order to secure S's knowledge that *she is not a brain-in-a-vat* prior to performing the inference, we needed to claim that S knows that she is not a brain-in-a-vat even though S does not possess adequate evidence for the proposition that *she is not a brain-in-a-vat* and even though S has no sufficiently reflective access to the factors that make it the case that she possesses such knowledge.

Thus, when S is attempting to say or think the argument through herself "that animal is a zebra, if that animal is a zebra, then I am not a brain-in-a-vat...." she realises that as soon as she states that she is not a brain-in-a-vat, she will be stating something which she lacks adequate evidence for. Thus, S will not complete the deduction. All of this holds, of course, only if S is sufficiently rational. Consequently, on my view we have no counter-example to *Deduction Principle\*\** but we do have a case where at least one conjunct of its antecedent is false.

## **§2.4 The Cartesian and Bloated Cartesian Predicament Reconsidered**

Now let's return to a simple inference in the original Cartesian Predicament like this:

*Bloated-Cogito Inference*

I possess narrow cognitive property **N**  
Therefore  
I exist

If a subject uses such a form of argument to acquire knowledge of its conclusion, is the subject's attempted performance of the deduction going to violate any of the requirements on performing a deduction that I have identified in the previous subsection? Is S repeating information like in the *Repetition Argument*? It does not appear obvious to me.

Is S attempting to state a claim which she lacks adequate evidence for? It is not obvious to me. S's evidence for the Cogito Argument premise is adequate. Perhaps it would consist in the subject merely being in a mental state individuated by property **N** or having an introspective awareness of being in a certain mental state individuated by property **N**. Perhaps S's evidence that she is in a mental state individuated by property **N** is also adequate evidence for the proposition that she exists. Perhaps S possesses or could possess alternative adequate evidence that she exists.

Moreover, things are similar when we consider the Bloated Cartesian Predicament. Of course, the Bloated Cartesian Predicament is a contrary to fact predicament, created by our making the contrary to fact assumption of the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*. But, given our assuming this contrary to fact predicament, it does not seem that any of the requirements I have identified on performing an inference are violated when one considers bloated cogito arguments.

For example, consider:

*Bloated-Cogito Inference*

I possess wide cognitive property **W**  
Therefore  
e

It is not obvious that in performing a deduction using such an argument S is repeating information. Nor is it obvious that S is attempting to state something for which she lacks adequate evidence. Consequently, I'd suggest that S can use such arguments to acquire strong a priori knowledge of their conclusions, given we are making the contrary to fact assumption of jointly assuming *CPA*, *SE* and *PAI*.

### §3 Wright and Davies Exposition

Contrary to my view, Wright and Davies contend that there are counter-examples to *Deduction principle\*\**. Moreover, they think that the features of these counter-examples can be extrapolated to give us counter-examples to *Deduction Principle\**

Moreover, they argue that in the case of “McKinsey Reasoning” the pertinent instance of *Deduction Principle\** fails, given they take “McKinsey Reasoning” to be *B-B Reasoning*. Since I interpret “McKinsey Reasoning” not as *B-B Reasoning* but as *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, then Davies and Wright’s position may have no impact on the exact formulation of my argument. It may, however, have an impact on the inferences that I allow can be performed when one is in the (contrary to fact) *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*.

Reconsider our previous case involving the BIV argument. The set-up of the situation that Wright and Davies endorse here is that, contrary to my view, the subject does in fact perform the deduction from the argument’s premises to its conclusion. But intuitively, we’d all agree that S does not *thereby* know the argument’s conclusion. Thus, Wright and Davies conclude that the argument is, in fact, a counter-example to *Deduction Principle\*\**.

Moreover, Wright and Davies allege that such cases give us a sufficient condition for counter-examples to *Deduction Principle\*\**. Specifically, they suggest that when a subject is in a certain epistemic structure, we have a counter-example to *Deduction Principle\**. Applied to our example, the structure Wright and Davies have in mind is:

*BIV Structure*

S knows that the animal is a zebra only if S knows that she is not a brain-in-a-vat.

I agree that *BIV Structure* is central to the case of the inference that we are considering. But I disagree that it provides a sufficient condition for a counter-example to *Deduction Principle\*\**. Rather, I suggest that BIV Structure obtains against the background of a subject possessing epistemological externalist knowledge that *she is not a brain-in-a-vat*. Now, given the knowledge in question is epistemologically externalist, S lacks adequate evidence for the proposition that *she is not a brain-in-a-vat* and S lacks sufficiently reflective access to the factors that constitute her knowledge. Thus, when S attempts the deduction in question



she realises that were she to state to herself “I am not a brain-in-a-vat” she would not possess adequate evidence for such a statement. Hence, S does not complete the competent deduction. Thus, we have no counter-example to *Deduction Principle\*\**.

(cf. My position with Pryor (2005, 2001 & 1997) & Silins (2005) who may also argue we have no counter-example to *Deduction Principle\*\** (and similar principles) because both its antecedent and consequent are true.)

## §4 Illusions of thought

Wright suggests that one counter-example to *Deduction Principle\** is given by a case where a subject undergoes an illusion-of-thought. In such a case, the subject’s utterances of say “water is wet” would express no proposition because the subject is on a distant planet where the substance water does not exist but she and her speech community are undergoing the communal hallucination that there is a certain watery substance in her environment. In such a situation, when S utters “I am thinking that water is wet”, she expresses no genuine thought thereby. But nonetheless S is having some kind of an experience as of having a thought. That is to say, on Dry-Earth, S must be in some mental state which is subjectively indistinguishable from the mental state she’d be in were the wide property **S is thinking that water is wet to individuate the mental state**. Such a scenario, of course, requires one to assume *SE* about cognitive predicates of the form ‘S thinks that water is wet’ and requires one to assume the *Proposition Theory* and *CPA*. This is because, were one not to assume the *Proposition Theory*, we could say that S has a mental state which is individuated by a certain cognitive property, it is just that that cognitive property is not characterised by a thinker having a cognitive attitude towards a proposition. For more on this issue see Chapter 2. Let’s call such a scenario *the Dry-Earth scenario*.

Now, imagine a different subject, S\*, considering the following argument on planet Earth:

### *Water Illusion*

- (W1) I am thinking that water is wet
- (W2) If I am thinking that water, then I am not in the Dry-Earth scenario
- Therefore,
- (W3) I am not in the Dry-Earth scenario

Wright's contention is that in order for S\* to possess "a priori" knowledge that (W1) one needs some kind of externalist or unearned knowledge that (W3). Thus, according to Wright, we have the following epistemic structure:

### *Structure 2*

S knows "a priori" that she is thinking that water is wet and if S thinks that water is wet then E only if S knows "a priori" that she is not in the Dry Earth scenario.

Wright's contention is that *Structure 2* is sufficient to give a counter-example to *Deduction Principle\**. However, crucial to Wright's claim is that a subject knows only weakly a priori that (W1). If a subject only acquires her belief that (W1) in a manner which does not use empirical evidence as grounds for her belief, then S would still need to discount the possibility that she is not on Dry Earth possessing a subjectively indistinguishable mental state. Wright's suggestion is that in such circumstances a subject possess "unearned", or in my terminology, externalist knowledge that (W3). There are at least three issues about this position of Wright's which I shall briefly mention.

Firstly, it is not clear what kind of a bearing such a diagnosis would have on the *B-B Reasoning*, since that reasoning is concerned with a subject performing the following inference:

### *Water Argument*

(W1) I am thinking that water is wet

(W2\*) If I am thinking that water, then E

Therefore,

(W3) E (where the proposition that E concerns the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects).

Secondly, it is not clear that *Structure 2* gives a counter-example to *Deduction Principle\**.

Rather, it may only show that a subject does not complete the competent deduction and that, instead, the relevant *Deduction Principle\** is true but its antecedent is false.

Thirdly, Wright's scenario is completely irrelevant when we are considering *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and we make the contrary to fact assumption that the conjunction of *PAI*, *CPA* and *SE* are true. Given our contrary to fact assumption we shift from the *Cartesian Predicament* to the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament*. And, the "a priori" knowledge we are dealing with in this predicament is strong a priori knowledge - knowledge we possess "just by thinking and possessing no empirical assumptions". The Bloated Cartesian Predicament is contrary to fact. But while we assume the predicament for a reductio of the

conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*, we need to follow through its consequences. One of those consequences is that a subject will already know strongly a priori that she is not on Dry Earth. Let me explain.

Consider a subject  $S^{**}$  in the Bloated Cartesian Predicament. Let's define the proposition that *E* as the proposition that *water exists or a certain speech community exists*. From the relevant instance of *SE* we have both:

(*SE*<sup>\*\*</sup>-1) The property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ' $S^{**}$  thinks that water is wet' expresses the (logically wide) property **S thinks that water is wet**.

(*SE*<sup>\*\*</sup>-2) The proposition that *S<sup>\*\*</sup> thinks that water is wet* logically implies the proposition that *E*.

Now consider the following inference:

*Bloated-Cogito-Water Argument*

$S^{**}$  possesses the property **S thinks that water is wet**  
Therefore,  
*E*

According to *PAI*, *S* can know that she possesses the (logically wide) property **S thinks that water is wet**. Let's suppose  $S^{**}$  in fact possesses such strong a priori knowledge. Then,  $S^{**}$  can just deduce that using the *Bloated-Cogito-Water-Argument*. In such circumstances,  $S^{**}$  will in fact possess strong a priori knowledge that *E*. Thus  $S^{**}$  knows strongly a priori that water exists or a certain speech community exists. But if  $S^{**}$  possesses such strong a priori knowledge, then she'll already know strongly a priori that she is not in the Dry-Earth scenario, since on Dry-Earth the substance water does not exist.

You might reply that it is absurd that  $S^{**}$  possesses or could possess strong a priori knowledge that *E*. I agree. The only point that I am making is that in such an (admittedly) absurd, and contrary to fact, scenario,  $S^{**}$  will also know strongly a priori that she is not in the Dry-Earth scenario.

## §5 Conclusion

I thus conclude that the points by Wright and Davies concerning one's failure to acquire knowledge by inference at best only have relevance to "McKinsey Reasoning", if "McKinsey Reasoning" is interpreted as *B-B Reasoning*. The version of "McKinsey Reasoning" which I defend, in the form of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is left untouched by the Wright-Davies point about our failure to acquire knowledge using valid arguments. Moreover, my illustration of the contrary to fact situation we are in when we assume the conjunction of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI* – the *Bloated Cartesian Predicament* – is also unaffected by issues that cast doubt upon whether we can acquire knowledge by using certain valid arguments or whether we can fully complete certain competent deductions.

## Chapter 6

In this chapter I shall evaluate the *PAI* thesis of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. I consider various objections to the *PAI* thesis in §1-2 from Quine and Devitt and also objections one might be tempted to derive from Descartes scholars like Kenny. I conclude that the *PAI* thesis is not defeated by these objections but suggest that they do place certain explanatory demands on the overall picture I (and McKinsey) am endorsing. In §3, I consider an alternative formulation of the Cartesian predicament from Farkas (2008) and conclude that this formulation, just like my *PAI* formulation, is afflicted by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. In §4 I discuss some motivations for the privileged access that is the concern of the *B-B Reasoning*. I suggest that the philosophical basis for its formulation is an intense desire to account for some distinctive way of knowing our own thoughts, given the *CPA* and *SE* theses are tacitly assumed. In §5 concludes.

### §1 Objections to PAI

The *PAI* thesis says:

*Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject, S, if S possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}$ , which is individuated by property **F**, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses **F**.

It is important to stress the strength of aprioricity involved: it is knowledge that is not based on any empirical assumptions and knowledge that a thinker could possess in a solipsistic world.

The strongest opponent to *PAI* I can spot in the literature is Devitt (1990, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006). Devitt has put forward a number of arguments suggesting that there is no such category of “a priori” knowledge. Devitt’s arguments sometimes appeared to be inspired by a classical Quinian (1951) argument for the conclusion that there is no a priori knowledge. An outline of the classical Quinian argument looks like this:

(Q1) Any sentence, \$, we take to be true might come to be rationally rejected as false in the light of experience, and there would be nothing which would make such an event a mere change of language and not a change of theory [claim]

(Q2) Therefore, the rationality of our currently assigning \$ truth does depend on that assignment's compatibility with a total assignment of truth values to sentences which fits well with experience [from Q2]

(Q3) Therefore, our acceptance of \$ depends on experience [from Q2]

The argument appeals to the Quinian sense of belief which is taken to be a sentence we take to be true.

Claim (Q1) results from Quine's web-of-belief model. The web-of-belief model holds that experience confronts the aggregate of our theories as a whole. Experience confirms or undermines a hypothesis only when other hypotheses are held true. Which hypotheses do we hold true? In the web-of-belief model this depends on many factors but it at least in part depends on pragmatic rationality – minimising the overall disruption to our beliefs. On the web-of-belief model, some beliefs are more central than others; the central beliefs are related to more beliefs than those at the periphery. There is a gradual rather than an absolute difference between beliefs at the centre and at the periphery. Hence, in light of recalcitrant experience, if two beliefs differ only in terms of centrality, then we jettison the least central belief on the grounds of pragmatic rationality.

“A recalcitrant experience can...be accommodated by any of the various alternative reevaluations...but our natural tendency [is] to disturb the total system as little as possible...” (Quine 1960, p44).

However, no belief is immune to revision, beliefs toward the centre may be more resistant to revision; but making the best sense of experience, can sometimes rationally require us to jettison a more central belief.

Thus according to the Quinian model, all beliefs are dependent on experience. So there is no a priori knowledge – knowledge independent of experience.

Some literature disputes the validity of the Quinian argument. It suggests that the argument is invalid because it equivocates on the notion of dependence (Giaquinto 1996). The thought behind this response is that the Quinian web of belief model shows that all our beliefs are negatively dependent on experience in the sense that retaining those beliefs depends on empirical evidence. But our beliefs being negatively dependent on experience, does not imply that they are positively dependent on experience in the sense that we need empirical evidence to acquire such beliefs.

I have not spotted anywhere where Devitt discusses these responses to the Quinian argument. However, even if such responses are correct, they won't help with my defence of *PAI*. This is because *PAI* speaks of strong a priori knowledge, not merely of weak a priori knowledge. Consequently the notion of *PAI* I have in mind is not positively dependent on empirical evidence and not negatively dependent on empirical evidence. What the response, if correct, may explain is why the notion of weak a priori knowledge is common currency in a wide range of philosophical discussions. In particular, if correct, the response may partly explain why certain commentators would rather not formulate "McKinsey Reasoning" using a notion of strong aprioricity and, instead, attempt to formulate it using the notion of weak aprioricity.

Moreover, all that matters for my purposes is that strong aprioricity of thoughts and meanings (and perhaps also certain simple deductive principles is a priori) is preserved, even if many of our claims about propositions which we claim to know strongly a priori are wrong.

In order to make some progress, we need to locate the elements of Devitt's work where he explicitly speaks of knowledge of thoughts or knowledge of mental states or even knowledge of meaning. Devitt (see, for example, 1990) endorses a so called "causal theory of meaning" (or "causal theory of reference") and "causal theory of thought content". According to the first of these theories certain term's meanings are determined by speakers' causal relations to contingently existing external physical objects. According to the second of these theories, certain thoughts composed of these meanings must also be determined by the thinker's causal relations to contingently existing external physical objects. Thus Devitt would seem to endorse *SE*, the view that cognitive predicates express logically wide properties in virtue of such properties being causally related to ordinary contingently existing physical objects or a speech community.

Thus, Devitt's endorsement of *SE* is a *CPA*-dependent explanation. Specifically, Devitt needs *CPA* to transform cases which speak of "de dicto structured cognitive predicates" into cases which speak of the metaphysical nature of mental states. Thus, if *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is sound, then Devitt would have to give up *PAI* in order to avoid the result of endorsing the seemingly incompatible combination of *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI*. So, one way of interpreting Devitt's position is this: he may accept the trilemma posed by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and his response to that trilemma would be to reject *PAI*

alone. Devitt is forced to choose to reject *PAI* because he endorses *SE* and at least tacitly assumes *CPA*.

In order for Devitt's rejection of *PAI* to be plausible, he owes us an explanation of why the Cartesian predicament which seemingly supports *PAI* in fact does not. Devitt needs to explain why individuating properties, including the paradigm cases of logically narrow properties such as the properties expressed by de se thought predicates cannot be strongly a priori.

Such an explanation of Devitt's is easy to give in the case of logically wide properties. Let us suppose that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***. Given the particular explanation of *SE* which Devitt endorses, the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute*** is individuating and is causally related to the contingently existing ordinary physical object George. Since this causal relation is always present when Laura possesses the property in question, the property logically implies the existence of the contingently existing physical object George.

However, Devitt's explanation is more tricky to give for a de dicto structured cognitive predicate that is claimed to express a logically narrow property. Consider, for example, the de se cognitive predicate 'Ollie thinks that he himself is a hero'. Does this express a property that is somehow related to ordinary contingently existing physical objects? Why can't the meanings of each of the words in this cognitive predicate be logically narrow? At this point it is instructive to listen to what Devitt says about certain description theories of reference:

"A description theory of reference explains the referential properties of one category of term by appeal to those of other categories. Perhaps description theories can be used again. But this cannot go on forever. There must be some basic terms whose reference is not parasitic upon others. Otherwise language as a whole is cut loose from the world. The ultimate explanation for reference cannot be a description theory." (1990, Ch. 5)

What moral should we draw from these comments of Devitt's? And how should we apply these comments to the example of de se cognitive predicates? Has Devitt shown that for every general term, *t*, *t* is ultimately determined by a causal relation to an ordinary contingent object? He may have shown that a certain interpretation of Putnam and Kripke's work results in *certain* proper names and kind terms ultimately being causally



related to ordinary contingently existing physical objects. But an inference that this moral should be extended from *some* kind terms and proper names to *all* general terms seems to be going a bit far. Devitt might reply that there simply is no other candidate apart from ordinary contingently existing physical objects to determine the meaning of the terms used by a subject. In fact, Devitt says:

“Description theories are not only incomplete, they are looking in the wrong place for the ultimate explanation of reference. For that explanation we must look also to what is outside the head” (1990, Ch.5).

Devitt’s inability to envisage a candidate that is “inside the head” or logically narrow, does not imply that there is no such candidate. In later chapters, I shall be suggesting that the meanings of certain terms can be private and internal to the subject because the meanings of such terms are private and internal to the speakers. Moreover, I shall argue that in the right circumstances certain private, internal and logically narrow states can still be about ordinary contingently existing physical objects. So Devitt’s case for denying *PAI* is inconclusive. For it to be conclusive, he would have needed to have ruled out logically narrow states as being candidates for determining the meaning of certain terms. And he also would have needed to rule out logically narrow states as being candidates for a subject to have thoughts about objects. What Devitt’s work has done, however, is to focus and sharpen the task myself and McKinsey have ahead: We need to explain how private and internal logically narrow states can be about public and external objects.

## §2 The scope of Cognitive attitudes

It might be possible to scrounge up objections to *PAI* by going through some Descartes commentaries. Inspired by the discussion in Kenny (1968) one might ask us to consider the predicate ‘S dreams that she herself is a thinking thing’. It might be suggested that this predicate expresses a property that is individuating and logically narrow. According to the privileged access thesis, *PAI*, S can know strongly a priori that she possesses this property. But surely Descartes would not allow that S can know strongly a priori that she possesses this property. So, is there something wrong with using *PAI* to capture the Cartesian predicament? I shall suggest not. What this case does suggest is that we need to be careful about what verbs we count as cognitive attitude verbs in the de dicto structured cognitive predicates of the form ‘Ses that \$’ of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

According to Kenny, the verb “cogitaire” has usage that is much wider than the English sense of “thinks”, rather the verb covers everything that exists in us in such a way that we are immediately aware of it. How are we to account for this immediate awareness? Kenny suggests the following test: If for a verb we answer the following question in the affirmative, then it can be used as a cogito premise “Is it true that when I  $\phi$ , I know that I  $\phi$ ?” For example, if  $\phi$  is replaced with ‘walk’, or ‘dream’, then we answer the question in the negative because one can dream without knowing that one is dreaming and one can be dreaming that one is walking. On the other hand, if  $\phi$  is replaced with ‘doubt’, ‘think’, ‘believe’, ‘seeming to see’, ‘experience’, we answer the question in the affirmative.

Thus, for the purposes of characterising the Cartesian predicament, we cannot treat the verb ‘dream’ as a cognitive attitude verb that is suitable for *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. If we do this, then it is not the *PAI* thesis that would be at fault for allowing a priori knowledge of the property expressed by the predicate ‘S dreams that she is a thinking thing’, rather the fault lies with treating the predicate as a cognitive predicate (i.e. as a predicate containing a cognitive attitude verb suitable for *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*). Thus, not every verb reporting an episode in a subject’s life will do for the construction of the cognitive predicates required by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*.

To be sure, Kenny, himself, suggests that though both sleep and waking life may consist of thoughts they are not themselves thoughts in the broad sense covered by the verb “cogitaire”. Kenny allows that a dreamer can prove her existence through the cogito with the proviso that the dreamer appeal to a premise involving a cognitive attitude verb involving something that she is immediately aware of in her dream, such as ‘I believe that I am a thinking thing’.

What is interesting about Kenny’s discussion of Descartes is that there is no mention of how we would handle cognitive attitude verbs which are claimed to express properties that logically imply the existence of ordinary contingent objects, such as ‘S thinks that George is cute’ (where ‘George’ is functioning as a proper name with no descriptive element). This is likely to be due to the date of the Kenny publication. It was published before Kripke (1972) and Kaplan’s (1979) work on the modal properties of sentences which might support *SE*. Consequently, it shows no recognition of the problems that occur with conjoining the Cartesian predicament summarised by *PAI* with *SE* and *CPA*. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is one attempt at trying to articulate the problems of assuming the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*.

### §3 Farkas' notion of privileged access

Some comments in recent literature which might be thought to suggest that the *PAI* thesis should be rejected in favour of an alternative thesis come from Farkas (2008). Here is a flavour of her remarks:

“Knowledge of mathematics is similar to perceptual knowledge in that the kind of things I can learn about mathematics with the help of my reasoning faculties are available to other potential knowers endowed with a similar reasoning apparatus, through the same route. I can prove Pythagoras’s theorem by using my reasoning abilities, and so can you.” (2009, p20).

“A priori knowledge of conceptual truths—like a square having four sides—is similar to the previously discarded faculties and their subject matters: other potential knowers, endowed with similar reasoning capacities, can get to acquire them in the same way as I can.” (pp20-1).

“The upshot is that the kind of things I know perceptually, or a priori, or through testimony, and, in some cases, through memory, can be known by others through the same routes, respectively. But what I learn by reflection or introspection can be learnt in that way only by me. What belongs to the mind can be determined relative to this capacity: the subject matter of this faculty is the mind.” (p23).

“A priori knowledge (that is, the kind of knowledge we have of logic, maths, and conceptual truths) is traditionally regarded as knowledge attained by the use of reason alone, and this description does not seem to apply to knowledge of our mental states...When I register that I feel a slight pain in my knee, the faculty I am using is different from the one used in establishing the correctness of the *modus ponens*. One difference between introspection and a priori knowledge is precisely that introspection provides special access to its subject matter, while a priori knowledge does not. It is worth noting that even philosophers who are sceptical about a priori knowledge of a traditional kind, like Donald Davidson, recognize that introspection has a certain essential first-person aspect. I do not share Davidson’s scepticism about a priori knowledge, but I think his example supports the claim that introspection should not be categorized together with the kind of a priori knowledge we have of logic and mathematics.” (pp25-6).

It is clear from these quotes that Farkas endorses an alternative formulation of privileged access thesis which does not at all use the term “a priori”.

The way of knowing our own mental states that Farkas envisages seems to have to satisfy something like this thesis:

### *The First Person-Third Party Knowledge Thesis*

Necessarily for any distinct subjects S and T: If S is thinking that *p*, then S can know that she is thinking that *p* in a special way but T cannot know that S is thinking that *p* in this special way.

My best attempt at describing the model of knowledge of thoughts that Farkas endorses is this:

#### *F-PAC*

Necessarily for any distinct subjects, S and T, and ‘non-a priori’ way of knowing, W, if S is thinking that *P*, then S can know that she is thinking that *p* in a special way W but T cannot know that S is thinking that *p* in way W.

*F-PAC* may be in need of further refinement. In particular, *F-PAC* would need to state whether or not S’s way of knowing, W, can depend on empirical assumptions. For the sake of simplicity I shall simply assume that this is so. However, I think *F-PAC* captures enough of the details of Farkas’ notion of privileged access to cause problems. Note the idea that way of knowing, W, in *F-PAC*, can’t be identical with an ‘a priori’ way of knowing – that is ‘knowledge without perceptual observation or empirical investigation’.

Farkas’ thesis *F-PAC* does seem to make the tacit assumption of *CPA*. Specifically, it seems to assume the property **S thinks that p** individuates with respect to the cognitive state that it describes. Now if some properties of the form **S thinks that p** are logically wide, then S could just deduce that ordinary contingently existing objects exist using only way of knowing W and the performance of a deduction. But such a predicament is absurd: we cannot know that ordinary contingent objects exist in such a manner.

So Farkas’ position appears to offer little improvement over a thesis like *PAI*.

## §4 The self-questioning model

Consider the weakened versions of the privileged access thesis I have been considering in this chapter and earlier chapters:

#### *W-PAC*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If S is thinking that *p*, then S can know weakly a priori that she thinks that *p*.

I have suggested that such formulations are not strong enough to capture the Cartesian predicament precisely because they fail to guarantee an unrevisability requirement on the knowledge which they speak about. However, while such theses are not apt candidates for the *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* I defend, they are frequently used in formulations of the *B-B Reasoning*. My query with such theses is that, given they are too weak to capture the Cartesian predicament, what philosophical basis do they have?

My suspicion is that these weakened theses are attempts to accommodate a philosopher's acceptance of *SE* and (perhaps tacit) acceptance of *CPA*. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* shows us that accepting both *CPA* and *SE*, results in our having to reject *PAI*. With *PAI* rejected, those who accept *CPA* and *SE* still want to account for our intuition that we have special first-personal way of knowing our mental states (or at least occurrent mental states). Their way of accounting for this intuition is to claim that our belief that we possess these mental states is acquired without perceptual observation or empirical investigation or in some broadly "reflective" manner but such a belief is still based on empirical assumptions or is revisable using empirical evidence.

At no point are the philosophers who endorse weakened privileged access theses tempted to say

"Look many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express logically wide properties, but claiming that we know strongly a priori that we possess such properties poses significant problems. So, we have to reject the claim such properties are individuating while continuing to adhere to the claim that we can know strongly a priori that we possess properties which individuate our mental states."

I suggest that these philosophers are not tempted to give this last response because they (at least tacitly) accept *CPA*. For the *CPA*-accepters logically wide properties are individuating. Consequently, in order to avoid problems they need to reject a strong privileged access thesis like *PAI* and endorse a weakened privileged access. In short, these *CPA*-accepters cannot place the blame on the claim that logically wide properties are individuating, so they blame the strength of apriority used to formulate the privileged access thesis.

Those who endorse the weakened privileged access thesis do sometimes attempt to press additional considerations in favour of the thesis. One popular approach is to appeal to a model I call the self-questioning model of privileged access (hereafter the *SQ model*).

The *SQ model* says something like this. Ask yourself any mundane question such as “Do you think Gödel is arrogant?” If you sincerely answer the question in the affirmative, then they’ll say something like “at the time of answering the question, you think the occurrent thought that Gödel is arrogant”.

Similarly, were you to truly and sincerely utter “I am thinking that Gödel is arrogant”, then the proponent of the *SQ-model* will say something like “at the time of making the utterance, you occurrently think that Gödel is arrogant”. The proponent of the model then continues, at the time of having those occurrent thoughts, you clearly could know that you were thinking them. Moreover, continues the proponent of the *SQ-model*, the kind of knowledge you have in possessing such thoughts seems to be very different from cases of perceptual knowledge and the way of accounting for this difference is to say that your knowledge is acquired without the use of perceptual observation or empirical investigation as a justificatory basis.

The proponent of the *SQ-model* is either silent about whether such knowledge rests on empirical assumptions or whether the belief in the mental state is revisable given evidence involving perceptual observation or empirical investigation. Perhaps the proponent of the *SQ-model* will label the kind of knowledge in question as “a priori” or “reflective” or something like that to distinguish it from perceptual knowledge.

A good example of the *SQ-model* comes from Brown. Brown explicitly states that a subject “can think about particular objects and kinds” (2004, p5). She also allows that such thoughts are individuated by ordinary contingently existing physical objects and kinds (2004, Ch.2). Then, when it comes to characterising her privileged access thesis she gives something like *W-PAC*. She says:

“once a subject has formed a propositional attitude on the basis of empirical evidence, she does not need to use that evidence to judge that she has the relevant attitude. For example, I might form the belief that lack of exercise is a risk factor for heart disease on the basis of data reported in a newspaper article. But I need not use empirical evidence that led me to form the belief to know that I have it” (2004, p35).

“a subject can typically have a priori knowledge of her propositional attitudes, that is, she can have such knowledge without basing it in a justificatory way on perceptual experience” (2004, p35).

This second quote allows that a subject may make empirical assumptions in acquiring such knowledge.

What I want to do is to unpick this description of the *SQ-model* and see if any of it can be transformed into the terms we are more familiar with such as *SE*, *CPA* and *PAI*. Consider the example of a subject, S, sincerely and truly uttering “Gödel is arrogant. On the *SQ-Model* we can infer we have a case here where a speaker, S, herself, is asserting the true de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘S thinks that Gödel is arrogant’. Moreover the speaker who is asserting the cognitive predicate is also the thinker in question - the subject S. Now, does the de dicto structured cognitive predicate express a logically wide property? The *SQ-model*, does not in itself make this claim. However, at least some proponents of the *SQ-model* are persuaded by the semantic evidence in favour of *SE* to the point where they’ll say that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate in question does possess a logically wide property. Is such a logically wide property individuating? If we tacitly accept *CPA*, then we’ll be forced to claim that it is.

But there may be a deeper reason as to why the proponent of the *SQ-model* who endorses *SE* wants the logically wide property to be individuating. The deeper reason is this: In the example in question, the proponent cannot envisage any other property which would individuate S’s mental state apart from a logically wide property. For example, even if there were a logically narrow property that individuates S’s mental state how could that logically narrow property be about an ordinary contingently existing physical object which is public and external to S. In short, even if logically narrow states alone are individuated with respect to the mental state they describe, how could such properties be about public and external physical objects when such states would be private and internal to S? In the absence of being able to envisage a plausible answer to this question, the proponent of the *SQ-model* who endorses *SE*, is forced to claim that the logically wide property in question is the *best candidate* for individuating S’s mental state at the time of the utterance because there simply is *no other candidate* for individuating that state which she can envisage.

I hope to show, in later chapters, how McKinsey could consistently endorse the *SQ-model*, while endorsing *SE* and also providing an alternative logically narrow property as the candidate for individuating S’s mental state. McKinsey’s endorsement of this logically

narrow property as being individuating, coupled with his rejection of the logically wide property as being individuating, allows him to endorse the strong privileged access thesis *PAI* without recourse to any of the weaker formulations of privileged access.

The answer McKinsey endorses allows, in sympathy with the intuitions in favour of *SE*, that the proper name 'Gödel' is one of our speaker (and thinker's) way of referring to the man Gödel in the public language and has no descriptive content in that language. However, this does not prevent the speaker having another way of referring to Gödel by way of a reference fixing description that involves descriptions which are private and internal to S. Thus, the individuating properties which are analogous to this private and internal reference-fixing description are both logically narrow and still pick out the man Gödel as the object which the speaker thinks of.

So, endorsement of the SQ-model together with *SE*, does not force us to claim that logically wide properties are individuating and thus does prompt us to endorse a weakened version of privileged access. Rather, it sets us the challenge of accounting for how, given *SE* and the SQ-model, private and internal logically narrow properties can be about public contingently existing physical objects which are external to the thinker.

## §5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered various objections to the *PAI* thesis. I have concluded that, while these objections do not show that the thesis is false, they do place a certain explanatory demand on any account of cognitive states that endorses the thesis. The explanatory demand is to explain how private and internal logically narrow states can be about public and external ordinary contingently existing physical objects.



## Chapter 7

In this chapter I shall evaluate the *SE* thesis of traditional McKinsey Reasoning and a claim made about the “externalist” thesis of the *B-B Reasoning*. I conclude that the *SE* thesis is left untouched by the objections to it. The claim concerning the “externalist” thesis of the *B-B Reasoning* is whether the claim in question is “a priori” knowable in some sense. Assessing this claim is an extremely delicate matter. This is partly because one can assess the claims *while assuming SE*, *CPA* and *PAI* or one can assess these claims while denying at least one of those claims. As noted earlier, some commentators on the *B-B Reasoning*, tend not to mention whether they would outright reject *SE* or just reject instances of *SE* involving kind terms such as ‘water’ or whether they wholeheartedly agree with *SE* (see Chapter 3). Consequently, it is hard to assess the precise explanations they wish to give for the truth of the “externalist” thesis in question and hard to understand how they would argue for its “a priori” knowability. My own view is that I have suggested that there is sufficient evidence to support the view that the *SE* thesis applies to proper names, indexical pronouns and natural kind terms like ‘water’ (see Chapters 1 and 2). So, when I consider the “a priori” knowability of the “externalist” thesis that is the focus of the *B-B Reasoning* I shall be assuming that the *SE* thesis is true for de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing the kind term ‘water’.

However, in order to give that explanation I first need to defend the *SE* thesis from objections. I do that in §1. In §2 raises some issues over the manner in which the proponents of the *B-B Reasoning* argue for the truth of the externalist thesis that they are concerned with. In §3 I consider I present a case against the a priori knowability of the “externalist” thesis of the *B-B Reasoning*, given that *SE* is true. §4 concludes.

### §1 Objections to SE

The best example of an argument against the *SE* thesis is anticipated by McKinsey (1994, pp309-310). Consider the following cognitive predicate:

(BIS) ‘Russell believes that Bismarck is an astute diplomatist’

The argument is that, contrary to what McKinsey and myself have claimed, the predicate is not structurally *de dicto*. That is to say, the term ‘Bismark’, while being a genuine term whose referent is completely exhausted by the contingently existing man, nonetheless has large scope relative to the belief operator. Thus, the argument is claiming that the cognitive predicate (BIS) is semantically equivalent to:

(BIS2) ‘Bismark is such that Russell believes that he was an astute diplomatist’

Now, given the argument that ‘Bismark’ has large scope in (BIS1) we must assume the anaphoric pronoun ‘he’ in (BIS2) has small scope relative to the belief operator. Thus McKinsey concludes:

“But of course, the anaphoric pronoun ‘he’ occurring in (2) is just as much a genuine term as ‘Bismarck’. Thus the claim that all genuine terms must have large scope relative to the belief operator is a claim that cannot even be understood unless it is taken in such a way that it implies its own falsehood.” (1994, p310)

So, claiming that the cognitive predicates that are the concern of the *SE* thesis are not really *de dicto* structured in an attempt to object to *SE* fails.

Another way of opposing the *SE* thesis would be to try to go consider piecemeal each of the cases involving different individual kinds of terms that are thought to support them. This strategy would involve suggesting the various Kripke, Kaplan and McKinsey (1987) cases do not support *SE*. However, such an attempt may be difficult to completely pull off simply because there are so many terms to which the *SE* thesis may apply. For example, would anyone deny that a cognitive predicate such as ‘Laura thinks that that man is cute’ expresses a logically wide property? If not, then the most this approach promises is to show that the *SE* thesis is more restricted in scope than initially claimed. It would not show that the *SE* thesis is false.

## **§2 The case in favour of the B-B Reasoning’s “externalist” thesis**

The “externalist” thesis that is the concern of the *B-B Reasoning* is, typically, established in this manner (see for example Kallestrup & Pritchard (2004, p346); Brown (2004 Ch.2), Boghossian (1997) pp162-165; Davies (1998, 2000); Wright (2000)).

First, make a claim about the S-wideness of about thought contents:

*S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a thought that p, then S's thought that p fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state.

Secondly, claim that the difference in thought contents between a subject, S, who thinks that water is wet and his doppelganger S\* on twin-earth who thinks that twater is wet is due to a difference solely in those thinkers environments. Then, we can say, that a subject's thought that water is wet implies, in some sense, that certain conditions in her environment obtain.

However, this argument also results in de se thoughts being S-wide. For example, if the property expressed by the predicate 'Ollie thinks that he himself is a hero' is individuating, then that too will turn out to fail to supervene on Ollie's internal physical states (see my comments in Chapter 2). So setting up the "externalist" thesis using *S-Wide externalism* ends up characterising internalists about the metaphysical nature of thought as "externalists". What has gone wrong?

I'd suggest that the problem is that this argument, being pitched at the level of the "metaphysical nature of mental states", assumes *CPA*. In order to see this, consider an expanded version of the thesis:

*S-Wide externalism-Expanded*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a property **F\***, then **F\*** fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state and property **F\*** is individuating.

I think we could all agree that many properties fail to weakly supervene on a subject's internal physical state. The problem is such properties can be logically wide or narrow. And, if *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is correct, the logically wide ones do not individuate.

I think that both internalists and externalists alike would endorse a version of the following thesis about properties:

### *S-Wide externalism About Properties*

In many cases, if a subject, S, possesses a property **F\***, then **F\*** fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state.

Where they disagree is over whether those properties are individuating. The metaphysical internalist will claim that only properties that are also logically wide are individuating. I would suggest that a true metaphysical externalist (i.e. someone who endorses *SE* and *CPA*) will claim that some properties also logically wide and, given *CPA*, are also individuating. So using the notion of *S-wide Externalism* to characterise the dispute between metaphysical internalists and externalists is unhelpful and never explicitly states *CPA* as a candidate for rejection.

## §3 The a priori knowability of the B-B Reasoning's "externalist" thesis

The instance of the claim that we are interested in assessing in the B-B Reasoning is:

### *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances*

For any subject, S, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p** and such properties fail to weakly supervene upon a subject's internal physical state, and any proposition that *e* which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects: S can know "a priori" that if she thinks that p then *e*.

Again we have a problem of assessing the strength of the apriority term in the scare quotes. Does the proponent have "strong a priori knowledge" in mind in the sense of knowledge that does not depend upon empirical assumptions? Or do they mean they have a weaker sense of apriority in mind? A weaker sense of a priority would coincide with the weak sense of apriority they use in the *W-PAC* thesis. Some of Boghossian's remarks suggest that he has a stronger sense of a priori in mind:

"Now, let us suppose that Oscar-our prototypical Twin Earth subject-is a compatibilist. I claim that Oscar is in a position to argue, purely a priori, as follows:  
1. If I have the concept water, then water exists.  
2. I have the concept water.  
Therefore,  
3. Water exists.

Since the conclusion is clearly not knowable a priori, one of the premises in Oscar's evidently valid reasoning had better either be false or not knowable a priori.”(1997, p165-6).

If the “a priori” knowability of the proposition that *water exists* is clearly absurd, then, given my argument in Chapter 4, the sense of “a priori” that conclusively guarantees this result is strong aprioricity. Moreover, Boghossian’s suggesting that Oscar can reason “purely a priori” strongly suggests that Oscar is not making any empirical assumptions.

On the other hand, in a (rarely discussed) response to his paper Boghossian seems to suggest he has a weaker sense of “a priori” in mind. He says:

“To claim that I can know that I have the concept water a priori is to claim that I can know without empirical investigation that I have thoughts that involve the concept water. Since for me, as for Frege and lots of others, concepts just are what thought contents are composed of, this is just another way of saying that I can know without empirical investigation what my thought contents are.” (1998, p257).

The sense of “a priori” in the quote above would seem to allow that a subject could make empirical assumptions, suggesting Boghossian adheres to a sense of weak aprioricity. Is the sense of aprioricity so weak that one could reason using the Boghossian argument while making the empirical assumption that *water exists*? If that is so then one could know a priori that water exists by pure a priori reasoning that takes place on the empirical assumption that water exists. Surely, Boghossian cannot have an argument as weak as that in mind.

So there is a difficulty in interpreting the sense of aprioricity that Boghossian has in mind but I think I have done enough to suggest that whatever the sense of aprioricity the knowledge in question cannot be based on the empirical assumption that water exists. I now wish to show that Boghossian has to make precisely such an assumption to argue for the claim *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* of the B-B Reasoning.

Boghossian’s case in favour of the claim, roughly, is this (1997, pp171-4): We are to imagine a distant planet from the actual world (call it *Dry-Earth*) in which water does not exist and the whole community of that planet is having a mass communal hallucination of the substance water. In such circumstances, Boghossian suggests, an inhabitant’s tokens of the word ‘water’ on this planet would be empty and the subject would possess no genuine thoughts about water. Rather, when a subject sincerely utters “I am thinking that water is a

liquid” he expresses no genuine thought thereby. The subject in question is not in a mental state that is characterised by the property of thinking a proposition. Boghossian then suggests that our envisaging such a situation shows that we know that if a subject is thinking a genuine water-thought, then water exists.

This argument of Boghossian’s has received much criticism (see for example, Korman (2006), Brown (2004), Ch8, Ball (2007) ).

My first comment about Boghossian’s reasoning is it assumes the *Proposition Theory* and *CPA*. For if the *Proposition Theory* and *CPA* were false, then why not say that in such a scenario a subject possesses a genuine thought that is not essentially characterised by the property of believing a proposition? The problem is, that the Proposition Theory and *CPA* may well be false. This may be what *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* is suggesting if *PAI* and *SE* cannot be denied.

My second worry about Boghossian’s argument is this. In order to set up the argument he needs to assert the sentence “Water does not exist on Dry Earth.” Now, in order for this sentence to make sense it needs to express a proposition. In cases where a term, *t*, is directly referential, however, the sentence “*t* does not exist” does not express a proposition unless the sentence “*t* exists” is true. Thus, the sentence ‘water does not exist on Dry Earth’ only expresses a proposition unless the sentence ‘Water exists’ is true. Thus, in order for Boghossian’s argument about Dry-Earth to get started, he must make the empirical assumption that water exists. Now, it might be replied that the term ‘water’ is not a directly referring term. However, given the semantics of natural kind terms I have discussed in Chapter 2, I believe that there are persuasive considerations to suggest that in simple non-cognitive sentences the term only contributes its referent to what is said. Moreover, Boghossian himself suggests that the term ‘water’ (on Earth) is directly referring:

“widespread intuition appears to have it that, whereas Oscar's tokens of 'water' apply exclusively to H<sub>2</sub>O, Toscar's tokens of 'water' apply exclusively to XYZ.” (1997, p164).

Thus even if Boghossian has a sound argument for the conditional claim “If Oscar thinks that water is wet, then water exists” he has established it only by using the empirical assumption that water exists. Consequently, Boghossian has not established that the conditional claim is “a priori” knowable in the sense that he intends.

## § 4 Conclusion

I have defended the *SE* thesis from the best objections that I could find. I have also discussed the claim *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* of the *B-B Reasoning*. I have suggested that the claim is false on the grounds that one needs to make the empirical assumption that water exists in order to establish the claim *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* and this undermines the a priori knowability of the conditional claim if S thinks that water is wet, then water exists. Moreover, I have also suggested that the manner in which some proponents of the *B-B Reasoning* argue for the truth of the “externalist thesis” they are concerned with is not helpful in characterising the real difference between internalists and externalists about the metaphysical nature of thought content.

## Chapter 8

The predicament *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* has put us in is that *CPA*, *PAI* and *SE* are incompatible. But there are strong philosophical cases for holding onto the latter two theses, which leaves us having to reject *CPA*. Why should we reject *CPA*? After all *CPA* is logically implied by the *Proposition Theory* and assuming the *Proposition Theory* may derive support from the works of Frege (1892) and Russell (1912). Recall that the *Proposition Theory* is simply the conjunction of the following two theses:

*Propositional Theory of Individuation (PTI)*

All cognitive attitudes and states are individuated by their propositional contents.

*Relational Theory (RT)*

All cognitive attitude verbs express relations between persons and propositions.

McKinsey argues that there are examples which show that the *Proposition Theory* is false by way of showing that both *PTI* and *RT* are false. However, having good reason to reject the *Proposition Theory* alone is not sufficient to show that one has good reason to reject *CPA*. This is because one can accept *CPA* without also accepting the *Proposition Theory*. The most that having good reason to reject the *Proposition Theory* can do is to *undermine one reason for accepting CPA*; it does not necessarily undermine *CPA* itself. McKinsey then constructs separate examples to show that *CPA* is false.

McKinsey's form of argument might prompt us to ask: Why couldn't he just directly state his counter-examples to *CPA* and not bother discussing counter-examples to the *Proposition Theory*? On McKinsey's behalf, I can give at least three responses to this question. Firstly, as we shall soon come to see, one's comprehension of McKinsey's counter-examples to *CPA* is greatly enhanced by first considering his counter-examples to the *Proposition Theory*. Secondly, had McKinsey just cited counter-examples to *CPA* alone then we would be left in a rather difficult dialectical position. The difficult dialectical position would be this:

*Difficult Dialectical Position*

Counter-examples to *CPA* give us good reason for rejecting that thesis; but the *Proposition Theory* has support from the history of philosophy and there are no counter-examples against it. So, we also have good reason to accept the *Proposition Theory* and the theses which that



theory logically implies one of those theses is *CPA*. Hence we have good reason to both accept and reject *CPA*.

Given McKinsey may not want to be in this difficult dialectical position, he must provide counter-examples to *both CPA* and the *Proposition Theory*. Thirdly, McKinsey's case for rejecting the *Proposition Theory* also carves out part of his positive proposal of how we have thoughts involving certain terms. Thus, his case for rejecting the *Proposition Theory* is not only essential for his rejection of *CPA* but also for his positive picture of the cognitive attitudes.

In §1 I go through a number of scene setting preliminaries to give a broad-brushstroke structure of McKinsey's argument against *CPA*. In §2-4 I describe McKinsey's argument against *CPA* in detail. In §5 I describe McKinsey's explanation of one problem his view faces. §6 briefly discusses further problems that McKinsey's view faces. §7 concludes.

## §1 Preliminaries

McKinsey's argument against the *Proposition Theory* involves examining what he calls *referring genuine terms* – terms whose referents are exhausted by ordinary contingently existing physical objects. For example, when the term 'George' functions as a proper name and a *referring genuine term*, it directly refers to the contingently existing man George. That is to say, the referent of the term 'George' when it functions in this way is completely exhausted by the contingently existing man George.

Similarly, the terms 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorous' when functioning as *referring genuine terms* directly refer to the contingently existing planet Venus. That is to say the term's referents, when the terms function in the way described, are completely exhausted by the contingently existing planet Venus.

When *referring genuine terms* feature in de dicto structured cognitive predicates, the predicate expresses the property of a subject believing a singular proposition. A singular proposition is a proposition which is a function of the referent of the *referring genuine term*.

McKinsey suggests that when a subject thinks of an object, that subject must base her reference to an object upon something. Thus, according to McKinsey, a subject must have

a means or way of thinking of the object in question in order to think singular propositions involving the object. McKinsey then infers that there must be something *in addition to believing* the singular proposition in question which is required to individuate or fully characterise a subject's mental state. This suggestion of McKinsey's, if he can make it good, would be a counter-example to one direction of *PTI*. Specifically, would be a counter-example to the right to left direction of *PTI*: a subject's thinking a singular proposition is not sufficient to individuate that subject's mental state.

Moreover, McKinsey, after reflecting upon the property which does individuate with respect to mental state, further suggests that singular proposition believed is not necessary to individuate a subject's mental state. This suggestion, if good gives us yet another example to *PTI* in the left to right direction.

Putting the last two suggestions together, McKinsey further suggests that the property which does individuate a subject's mental state is not identical to a subject's believing a (singular) proposition; consequently, thoughts are not relations between persons and propositions, contrary to *RT*. Instead, McKinsey advocates that the properties which individuate a subject's mental state are so-called *mental anaphoric properties* which contain a complex amalgamation of certain descriptive assumptions (which may be first-personal and private and internal to the thinker) and cognitive attitude towards the referent (if any) picked out by those descriptive assumptions.

McKinsey's suggestions require rejection of the following assumption which might be made by some in the philosophy of language:

#### *Unity Assumption*

For all referring genuine terms, *t*; non –cognitive simple sentences containing *t*,  $\$(t)$ , and singular propositions that *p* expressed by  $\$(t)$ : A de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form 'S **cs** that  $\$(t)$ ', expresses the property **S cs that *p***.

The Unity Assumption can be split into two parts:

#### *Unity Part 1*

For all referring genuine terms, *t* which have no descriptive linguistic meaning in the public language; non –cognitive simple sentences containing *t*,  $\$(t)$ , and singular propositions that *p* expressed by  $\$(t)$ : A de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form 'S **cs** that  $\$(t)$ ' expresses the property **S cs that *p***.

### *Unity Part 2*

For all referring genuine terms,  $t$  which *do have linguistic meaning in the public language*; non – cognitive simple sentences containing  $t$ ,  $\$(t)$ , and singular propositions that  $p$  expressed by  $\$(t)$ : A de dicto structured cognitive predicate of the form ‘ $S$  **cs** that  $\$(t)$ ’ expresses the property  **$S$  cs that  $p$** .

*Unity Part 1* is exclusively concerned with referring genuine terms which have no descriptive linguistic meaning. *Unity Part 2* is exclusively concerned with referring genuine terms that do in fact have descriptive linguistic meaning. McKinsey explicitly agrees with *Unity Part 1*. What McKinsey disputes is *Unity Part 2*. At this stage you might ask “what right has McKinsey got to suggest that there are terms which have descriptive linguistic meaning?” Later on in this chapter I shall outline McKinsey’s case for there being referring genuine terms which have descriptive meaning in the public language. For expository purposes at the moment, I’d simply ask the reader to assume that there are such terms in the public language.

McKinsey suggests that there is a radical semantic difference within the class of *referring genuine terms*. On the one hand, according to McKinsey, there are referring genuine terms that have no descriptive meaning in the public language. For example, the proper name ‘George’ has no descriptive meaning in the public language. On the other hand, according to McKinsey, it is at least a theoretical possibility that a genuine term such as ‘Hesperus’ or ‘Phosphorus’, while having referents completely exhausted by the contingently existing planet Venus, also have descriptive meanings in the public language.

## **§2 Genuine terms with descriptive linguistic meaning and counter-examples to the *Proposition Theory***

Here is a simplified example (from McKinsey (1994), Loar (1985) and Salmon (1986)) showing how the theoretical possibility of genuine terms with descriptive linguistic meanings results in those terms not expressing logically wide properties when they occur small scope in some cognitive contexts.

Let us suppose that  $S$ , a citizen of ancient Rome, regularly recognizes and refers to the brightest heavenly body on the western horizon in the evening and the name he uses to

refer to the heavenly body so recognized and described is 'Hesperus'. S also recognizes and refers to the brightest heavenly body on the eastern horizon in the morning, using the name 'Phosphorus'. S does not, himself, recognise that when he uses these two names he is referring to one and the same planet – the contingently existing physical planet Venus. Thus, S would dissent or withhold assent from the sentence 'Hesperus is phosphorus'. S would also assent to the sentence 'Hesperus appears in the evening' and for most of his life would not have assented to 'Phosphorus appears in the evening'.

At some point in S's life, an exciting new theory is constructed from which it follows that Hesperus = Phosphorus. S does not learn about this new theory at all, but one fact that follows from the theory is passed on to S: the fact that Phosphorus also appears on the evening horizon. So, given this new information, S also assents to 'Phosphorus appears in the evening', though it still does not occur to him that perhaps Hesperus is Phosphorus.

After the information is passed on to him, S now assents to both the sentence 'Hesperus appears in the evening' and the sentence 'Phosphorus appears in the evening'. Moreover, these two sentences express the same proposition, since, the names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are both genuine terms that refer to the same planet Venus.

What beliefs does S express when, after receiving the new information, he assents to both of these sentences? It is not plausible to say S has the same belief because, in light of the new information, when he began assenting to 'Phosphorus appears in the evening' he acquired a new belief. We might say that in light of the new information "S changed his mind". However, since during this "change of mind", S always possessed the belief he would express with the sentence 'Hesperus appears in the evening', the new belief he has acquired cannot be identical must be a different belief.

S uses two sentences that express the same proposition to express two different beliefs. S's beliefs are different, even though they have the same singular proposition as their content (the singular proposition that *Venus appears in the evening*). So we have a counter-example to one direction of the PTI thesis.

The example suggests that there is something more to S's beliefs than just (singular) proposition believed but what more? McKinsey's (1994, p314) suggestion is that S must base her reference to an object in order to believe singular propositions involving the object in question (in this case Venus). S must have some way or means of thinking of the

object in question in order to believe singular propositions involving that object. Thus this way or means of thinking of the object in question is something *in addition to* the singular proposition believed.

McKinsey's suggestion is that the following two belief properties will do the trick in individuating S's beliefs in each case:

**(MA1) S assumes that just one heavenly body is brightest on the western horizon in the evening, and he believes that *it* (that very heavenly body) appears in the evening.**

**(MA2) S assumes that just one heavenly body is brightest on the eastern horizon in the morning, and he believes that *it* (that very heavenly body) appears in the evening.**

How should we analyse such constructions? This question is not easy to quickly answer. I shall, thus, take a brief detour into how McKinsey suggests we analyse similar properties in order to give a definitive answer to this question.

### **§3 Mental Anaphora**

Consider (non-factive) de dicto structured cognitive of the form 'S wishes that \$' where \$ is a simple non-cognitive sentence. Specifically, let's consider the de dicto structured cognitive predicate

(O) 'Oscar wishes that he had caught the fish that got away'.

On one of its readings, (O) can be true even though no fish actually got away from Oscar (he had a branch or old boot on the end of his line). On this same reading, the wish ascribed to Oscar by (O) would be consistent. To capture this reading, McKinsey proposes that we follow a suggestion made by Geach (1967) for understanding similar cases, and analyse the relevant reading of (O) as follows:

**(MAO) Oscar assumes that just one fish got away, and Oscar wishes it had been the case that he caught *it* (that very fish).**

McKinsey (1986, 1994) argues that the second occurrence of the pronoun ‘it’ in **(MAO)** is neither a bound variable nor going proxy for a description. Rather, the best hypothesis is that ‘it’ is functioning here as what Evans (1977) called an ‘E-type’ pronoun, a rigid genuine term whose referent is fixed by the description recoverable from its quantifier antecedent (cf. Geach (1967)). McKinsey calls such readings of **(MAO)** *mental anaphora*. Similarly, I call constructions such as **(MAO)** *mental anaphoric properties*.

Suppose that just one fish did get away from Oscar at a time, *t*, and call it ‘Bubbles’. Since the truth of the singular proposition that *Oscar catches Bubbles at t* would make Oscar’s wish come true (at some other possible world), and since the words ‘he caught it’ in **(MAO)** express this proposition, this singular proposition would be the content of the wish ascribed by **(MAO)**. But then, Oscar’s wish would really be about Bubbles. But this wish would be about Bubbles *merely because* Bubbles in fact uniquely satisfies the descriptive assumption on which the mental act involved in Oscar’s wish is based.

McKinsey’s suggestion is that we analyse the constructions **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** in the same way as **(MAO)**. In the constructions **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** the pronoun ‘it’ is neither a bound variable nor going proxy for a description. Rather, in **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** ‘it’ is functioning as a rigid genuine term whose referent is fixed by the description recoverable from its quantifier antecedent.

Note that properties **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** are different since their first conjuncts – the components involving S making a descriptive assumption – are different. Thus, **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** are different cognitive properties. However, although the properties **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** are different, in the circumstances described in the last section, the propositions believed, as opposed to those assumed, are the same: in each case S believes the singular proposition that *Venus rotates*.

McKinsey also argues that further manipulation of the Hesperus-Phosphorus example in the last section shows that sameness of proposition believed is not necessary for sameness of belief. McKinsey asks us to imagine a possible world in which Mars, rather than Venus, is the brightest heavenly body on the eastern horizon in the morning and in which **(MA2)** is true. In this manipulated example, **(MA2)** is still true just as it was in our initial example but the singular proposition believed is different: In this manipulated example, S believes the singular proposition that *Mars rotates* whereas in the initial example S believes the

singular proposition that *Venus rotates*. So in the initial example and manipulated example, S's beliefs are the same but the singular proposition believed by S is different. Hence, sameness of proposition believed is not necessary for sameness of belief.

The initial Hesperus-Phosphorus example in the last section can be manipulated in yet another way: Imagine a world in which **(MA2)** is true but the whole population has a mass optical illusion and there is no planet which rotates. In this example, S's belief has no propositional content but S still has a genuine belief characterised by the cognitive property **(MA2)**. Again, comparing this example with the initial example, shows that sameness of proposition believed is not necessary for sameness of belief.

Moreover, the mental anaphoric properties **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** show that *RT* is also false. *RT* says that cognitive attitudes express relations between persons and propositions. But if the mental anaphoric properties like **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** individuate beliefs then cognitive attitudes do not express relations between persons and propositions, contrary to *RT*. Rather, according to McKinsey,

“cognitive operators like 'thinks that' and 'believes that' do not express relations of any sort. Rather, they form one-place predicates out of sentences (open or closed).” (1999, p527).

Now since the properties **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** are logically narrow these are permissible as individuating the cognitive state of S (the citizen of ancient Rome in the example of the last section). Note that not all such mental anaphoric properties will be logically narrow: Some may be logically wide and those that are will still not individuate the cognitive state that they describe. It just so happens that both **(MA1)** and **(MA2)** are logically narrow because the descriptive linguistic meanings of the terms ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ contain no objectual element.

Thus, according to McKinsey, terms with descriptive linguistic meaning, in fact, have two kinds of meaning: descriptive linguistic meaning and propositional meaning. Their linguistic meanings are:

(LM1) For any token  $\alpha$  of 'Hesperus',  $\alpha$  is to refer to an object  $x$  if and only if  $x$  = the brightest heavenly body on the western horizon in the evening,

(LM2) For any token  $\alpha$  of 'Phosphorus',  $\alpha$  is to refer to an object  $x$  if and only if  $x$  = the brightest heavenly body on the eastern horizon in the morning.

Their positional meaning in the original circumstances just is their referent – the contingently existing planet Venus.

In the next section, I shall outline McKinsey's comments on genuine terms that have no descriptive linguistic meaning and only have propositional meaning.

## §4 Genuine terms with no descriptive linguistic meaning

Were all terms to have descriptive meanings like the theoretical examples of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' in the last subsection, then de dicto structured cognitive predicates constructed using simple sentences containing these terms would all express narrow properties which individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe. Thus, on the assumption that all terms have descriptive meanings, all de dicto structured cognitive predicates constructed out of simple sentences would individuate with respect to cognitive state described or, in other words, *CPA* would be true.

Of course, on McKinsey's view it is not the case that all terms have descriptive meanings. On McKinsey's view many referring genuine terms have no descriptive meaning and merely have referents which are completely exhausted by ordinary contingently existing physical objects. Proper names like 'Gorge' or 'Godel' are examples of such terms.

So, for McKinsey, de dicto structured cognitive predicates applied to simple sentences containing genuine terms with no descriptive meaning express precisely the property of believing a singular proposition. For example the cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is cute' expresses the property **Laura thinks the singular proposition that *George is cute***. We have seen by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* that if such properties are individuating, then given *PAI* and *SE*, we reach an absurd conclusion. Thus, on McKinsey's view, the properties expressed de dicto structured cognitive predicates applied to simple sentences containing genuine terms with no descriptive meaning do not individuate with respect to cognitive state they describe.



Consequently, due to the existence of genuine terms with no descriptive meaning and the way such terms behave when they have small-scope in de dicto structured cognitive predicates, such cognitive predicates do not express properties which individuate with respect to cognitive state described. Thus, *CPA* is false: Not every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property which individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes.

However, the existence of two radically different types of referring genuine terms (those with descriptive linguistic meaning and those without such meaning) creates a further problem for McKinsey that I shall consider in the next section.

## §5 The contribution problem

McKinsey's view that many cognitive predicates containing genuine terms express logically wide (and non-individuating) cognitive properties but some express logically narrow (and individuating) properties faces a problem. How is it that one kind of genuine term can behave in one way when in the scope of a certain cognitive operator whereas a different kind of genuine term behaves in a radically different way when it is in the scope of the very same operator? McKinsey call this problem the *Contribution Problem*.

Stated in a different way the *Contribution Problem* says: Why is it that a referring genuine term with no descriptive meaning contributes only its referent when it occurs in a sentence within the scope of a certain cognitive operator, whereas a referring genuine term with descriptive meaning contributes its descriptive meaning, rather than its referent, when it occurs in a simple sentence which is in the scope of a cognitive operator?

One might be provoked to ask these questions due to the behaviour of the two different kinds of referring genuine terms in simple sentences where no cognitive operators are involved. In simple sentences the referring genuine term contributes only its referent to the proposition expressed by the sentence regardless of whether or not it has descriptive meaning. For example, the simple non-cognitive sentence 'George is five feet tall' when 'George' is a referring genuine term with no descriptive meaning expresses the singular proposition that *George is five feet tall*. And the simple non-cognitive sentence 'Hesperus rotates' expresses the singular proposition that *Venus rotates*. However, in cognitive contexts the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that George is five feet

tall' expresses the (logically wide) property **Laura thinks that *George is five feet tall***. Whereas, the cognitive property 'Laura thinks that Hesperus rotates' expresses the following mental anaphoric property:

**(MA3) S assumes that just one heavenly body is brightest on the western horizon in the evening, and he believes that *it* (that very heavenly body) rotates.**

McKinsey's dissolution of the consequence problem involves an emendation of Sellar's (1963) Jonsean myth about how the cognitive predicates were introduced into ordinary language. McKinsey's interpretation of that story, as he understands it, is cognitive predicates were introduced in order to provide semantic classifications of theoretical inner states. So, a predicate of the form 'believes that \$' is supposed to classify a person's belief as one that is semantically analogous to the sentence \$. Thus, syntactically, the operator 'believes that' was introduced on the assumption that, for any well formed sentence \$, 'believes that \$' will be a well formed predicate.

But the original Sellars picture is faced with a problem when we consider the fact that the sentences which can occur in the belief predicate 'believes that \$' can differ radically in their semantics. And, it may have taken some time since the initial publication of Sellars' picture, for these radical difference in sentence semantics to be revealed. For example, Kripke's (1972) Gödel-Schmidt case shows that there are sentences containing referring genuine terms that have no descriptive meaning in the public language and express only singular propositions that are a function of the genuine term's referent. There is at least the theoretical possibility that \$ contains a referring genuine term which does have descriptive meaning and thus allows there to be a way of thinking about the genuine term's referent. There may be other cases where a genuine term has descriptive meaning and no referent, so the sentence it is contained in expresses no proposition. There are other cases involving indexical pronouns which have linguistic meanings that depend on context and rely on context to determine what proposition is expressed by the sentence.

Given these radical differences in the semantics of sentences that might occur in the operator 'believes that \$' McKinsey says:

"it is hard to see how belief predicates could all have a uniform type of Interpretation. And yet we introduced the belief operator on the assumption that, for every well-formed sentence S, 'believes that S' is going to be a well-formed predicate that provides a way of semantically classifying a belief.

So what are these predicates supposed to mean? The fact is that when we introduced belief predicates into our language we didn't know what we were doing. For the predicates are in effect metalinguistic and semantic in nature, and yet we did not then, nor do we now, know much of anything about the semantics of the sentences on the basis of which the "analogous" belief properties are supposed to be constructed. Yet we went ahead and introduced the predicates anyway, and let the semantic properties of the sentences of our language (whatever they may be) dictate what the resulting belief predicates might say about our beliefs. We introduced the predicates, and let the semantic chips fall where they may." (1994, p320).

McKinsey claims that when we introduced the cognitive predicates, such as 'believes that \$' in our language our intention was to use them to say as much as possible about our cognitive states. We hoped that the cognitive predicates would express belief individuating properties and thus gave this interpretation of the predicates priority over all others.

If the sentence \$ in the predicate 'believes that \$' has sufficient semantic characteristics to individuate the corresponding belief, then this predicate is interpreted as expressing an individuating property. Let's call such an interpretation of the cognitive predicate 'believes that \$' the *default interpretation*. In particular when \$ contains a descriptive genuine term, the referent of the term (if any) drops out as irrelevant to the classification of the belief because the referent is not relevant to the property that individuates the belief, rather it is the descriptive meaning of the term that is relevant. Whenever possible we always seek to give the default interpretation of belief predicates.

However, the default interpretation of cognitive predicates does not always work. For example, when a sentence \$ contains a referring genuine term with no descriptive meaning ( $t^*$ , say), \$ is too poverty stricken to allow an application of the default interpretation. Instead,  $t^*$ 's referent becomes relevant to the interpretation because without it there would be no interpretation. Were we not to use  $t^*$ 's referent to semantically classify the belief, we could not use \$ to classify the belief at all. Thus, when the default interpretation fails, we use  $t^*$ 's referent to classify the belief and the cognitive predicate 'believes that \$' becomes semantically de re.

We are in a similar position when we have a cognitive predicate 'believes that \$2' where \$2 contains a (non-anaphoric) indexical with a context-dependent meaning (say  $t^{**}$ ): \$2 is too poverty stricken to allow an application of the default interpretation. So  $t^{**}$  becomes relevant to the interpretation or there would be no interpretation. Thus, when the default

interpretation fails, we use  $t^{**}$ 's referent to classify the belief and the cognitive predicate 'believes that  $\$2$ ' becomes semantically de re.

Summarising this situation McKinsey says:

“In short, the quite different kinds of semantic properties possessed by the sentences of our language force us to construct quite different kinds of belief predicates out of these sentences. As a result, there lies within the class of structurally de dicto predicates a sharp distinction between those that are semantically de re and those that are semantically de dicto, that is, those predicates that express narrow, individuating belief properties that are not de re. If this is right, then the traditional semantic distinction between de re and de dicto exists within the class of structurally de dicto belief predicates.” (1994, p321).

Of course, McKinsey's conclusion only holds if his assumption that there are descriptive names in real language holds good. I shall briefly suggest how he defends this assumption in the next section.

## §6 Are there descriptive names in real language?

McKinsey's view is opposed in two directions. One way of opposing McKinsey is to keep the Unity Assumption, by claiming that there are no genuine terms with descriptive meaning in the public language; this is the view of *Russellian Relationalists*. Another way of opposing McKinsey's position is to claim that the *Unity Assumption* is false because there are no genuine terms at all. On this latter view, all terms have some descriptive meaning or another. However, McKinsey takes the semantic evidence of Kripke and Kaplan to show that this latter view is false. Thus, McKinsey sees the *Russellian Relationalists* as his toughest opponent. McKinsey has a number of arguments against the *Russellian Relationalists* which I do not have the space to give here (see McKinsey 1999 especially p519-36). Even if such arguments are successful this would only secure McKinsey the result that genuine terms with descriptive linguistic meanings are theoretical possibilities. McKinsey is still left with the question of whether there are cases of terms with descriptive linguistic meaning in real language. In the absence of evidence for the existence of genuine terms with descriptive meanings in real public language, it might be thought that McKinsey's view has no application to our use of cognitive predicates in real language. In the absence of such

evidence, perhaps we ought to conclude that our public language contains only genuine terms with no descriptive meaning.

McKinsey, however, suggests that there is sufficient evidence that genuine terms with descriptive meaning exist in the public language. He says:

"descriptive names do exist, and though they are statistically rare, they are, I think, theoretically important. The common feature of such names is that their referents (if any) are epistemically remote from all speakers in the same way, so that all speakers have to base their reference with the name upon the same narrow set of descriptive assumptions. One excellent example suggested by Kripke (1972, p. 291) is the name 'Jack the Ripper', used to refer to whoever was the murderer of several prostitutes in 1890's London, but about whom nothing else is known. 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' also seem to be good examples, at least as used by the ancient Greeks, since everyone's access to these names' referent was then based solely on visual impressions of the planet in different locations at different times of day. (The English terms 'the Evening Star' and 'the Morning Star' may well be descriptive names that accurately translate the Greek names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', respectively.<sup>31</sup>) Other good candidates for descriptive names include names of deities like 'Zeus' and 'God'; names of historically remote figures about whom little if anything is known, such as 'Homer' and 'King Arthur'; and pseudonyms, including pen names, at least prior to revelation of the referents' "real" identities.

It is of course always an empirical question as to whether or not a given name has a descriptive meaning in a language" (1999, p537).

I think that McKinsey has put enough of a case here to suggest that while, many names in our language, have no descriptive meaning (which is partly due to Kripke's (1972) Gödel-Schmidt case), there are at least a small class of such names in real language which do also have descriptive linguistic meaning.

## §7 Conclusion

I have briefly outlined McKinsey's picture of the properties expressed by cognitive predicates. A cognitive predicate of the form 'S cs that \$' where \$ is a simple sentence that may express a singular proposition *p*, can differ quite radically in the properties they express. The question depends on what terms are contained in the simple sentence \$. If \$ contains a referring genuine term with no descriptive meaning, then the predicate will express the property of S having a certain cognitive attitude toward a singular proposition. If \$ contains a genuine term with linguistic descriptive meaning, then the referent (if any)

of the genuine term will drop out as irrelevant and the term will contribute its linguistic meaning to what is said by the cognitive predicate and the predicate will express a mental anaphoric property. Are all such mental anaphoric properties logically narrow and individuating? No. It is possible that such properties are objectual in that they themselves contain referring genuine terms with no linguistic meaning. However, some mental anaphoric properties are logically narrow and do individuate the cognitive states they describe. I discuss these cases in more detail in the next chapter.

## Chapter 9

With the cognitive predicate assumption rejected, how can we have thoughts (or other cognitive attitudes) *about* objects? How can we have thoughts *about* natural kinds? In particular, if the only mental states we have privileged access to consist of logically narrow, private and internal states, then how can such states be about public and external contingently existing ordinary physical objects? There are also other separate questions: How can we have thoughts which might be expressed using terms which have descriptive meaning in the public language, thoughts involving the term ‘Jack the Ripper’ or ‘Santa Claus’ for instance? What happens when we are in error in some sense? In this chapter I shall briefly sketch some of McKinsey’s answers to these questions, which, I, myself, shall also be endorsing.

In §1, I briefly review some of the various kinds of mental anaphoric properties which can be expressed by certain de dicto structured cognitive predicates. Some of these properties are logically narrow and some of them are logically wide. I show how it is only the logically narrow properties which individuate our mental states. I also show how the logically wide mental anaphoric properties are themselves susceptible to an amended version of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. In §2 I show how one can have (logically narrow) mental states individuated by mental anaphoric properties which are about natural kinds. In §3 I show how one can have (logically narrow) mental states individuated by mental anaphoric properties which are about ordinary contingently existing physical objects. In §4 I try to briefly outline cases of a subject possessing (logically narrow) mental states individuated by mental anaphoric properties that do not succeed in picking out a single object or single kind. In §5 I briefly defend the view of thoughts about objects and kinds sketched in the earlier sections against two prominent objections. §6 concludes.

### §1 Mental anaphoric properties

In the last section, I sketched McKinsey’s suggestion that de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing genuine terms with descriptive meaning express certain mental anaphoric properties. For example the de dicto structured cognitive predicate ‘S believes that Hesperus appears in the evening’ expresses the following mental anaphoric property:

**(MA1) S assumes that just one heavenly body is brightest on the western horizon in the evening, and he believes that *it* (that very heavenly body) appears in the evening.**

This particular mental anaphoric property is logically narrow in the sense that it does not logically imply the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects. However, the descriptive assumption succeeds in picking out the ordinary contingently existing physical object Venus. So, the particular mental anaphoric property **(MA1)** being logically narrow individuates S's cognitive state and still succeeds in being about the ordinary contingently existing physical object Venus.

However, matters become tricky when we deal with de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing a kind term such as 'water'. McKinsey, and myself, would claim that such terms *do* have descriptive linguistic meaning in the public language. However, these descriptive linguistic meanings are *objectual*, in the sense they logically imply the existence of a contingently existing physical object. For example, the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that water is wet' might have one of the following two objectual linguistic meanings:

(DF3)  $x$  is water iff  $x$  is the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Earth.

(DF4) For any  $\phi$ , if  $\phi$  is a token of 'is water', then for any property **P**,  $\phi$  is to predicate **P** if and only if: there is a natural kind  $K$  such that in the actual world, the colourless, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid that we have experienced belongs to  $K$ , and **P** = the property of belonging to  $K$ .

Corresponding to these objectual descriptive linguistic meanings, we might say that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that water is wet' expresses one of the following two mental anaphoric properties:

**(MA3) S assumes that there is just one kind that the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Earth belongs and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.**



**(MA4)** S assumes that there is just one natural kind to which liquid that is colourless, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid and that we have experienced belongs, and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.

Do these properties individuate S's mental state? No. They are logically wide properties. Property **(MA3)** is semantically de re with respect to the planet Earth. Property **(MA4)** is semantically de re with respect to the group referred to by the pronoun 'we'. That is to say in the respective properties the terms 'Earth' and 'we' are functioning as genuine terms (which do not, themselves, have context-independent linguistic meanings) whose sole function is to introduce their referent into the property in question.

We could set up an amended versioning of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* to show this. We just need to cite that the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that water is wet' expresses the (logically wide) property **(MA3)**.

The relevant instance of *SE* which we need to use is one which says: The de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that water is wet' expresses the property **(MA3)** and this property is logically wide because it is semantically de re with respect to the planet *Earth*.

## §2 Logically Narrow thoughts about kind terms

So the question remains: how can a subject have thoughts about natural kind terms especially when de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing such natural kind terms are logically wide? In order to recover an individuating property from the properties **(MA3)** and **(MA4)** we need to characterise the way in which the subject thinks of the object which features in the kind term's (objectual) linguistic meaning; doing that yields yet another mental anaphoric property which is logically narrow (and individuating). The following examples, corresponding to **(MA3)** and **(MA4)** would seem to do the trick:

**(MA3\*)** S assumes that there is just one planet that he inhabits and S assumes that there is just one kind that the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on *that planet* belongs and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.

**(MA4\*)** S assumes that there is just one group consisting of himself and all who bear R to him and S assumes that there is just one natural kind to which liquid that is colourless, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid and experienced by *that group* belongs, and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.

The properties **(MA3\*)** and **(MA4\*)** are logically narrow in the sense that they do not logically imply the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects. Moreover, **(MA3\*)** and **(MA4\*)** would succeed in picking out the natural kind term ‘water’.

### §3 Logically Narrow thoughts about objects

How can a subject have private and internal logically narrow cognitive attitudes about public and external contingently existing physical objects? In short, McKinsey’s answer to this question, which I endorse, is one has such thoughts in virtue of possessing certain individuating mental anaphoric properties which use descriptive assumptions to pick out the object in question. McKinsey is restricting his model to our having thoughts about unsighted objects. McKinsey is more coy about what goes on when we have thoughts about sighted objects. About the latter case he merely says:

“Now there could be another, weaker, sort of causal view of thought about objects on which some particular sort of causal relation, while not a necessary condition of mental reference, at least provides one way, among others, of thinking about physical objects. One obvious candidate for such a causal relation is the particular sort that is involved in perception, and I would not deny that in such cases, causation plays a role in determining mental reference. But most causal theorists have also believed that even thoughts about objects of which the thinker is not perceptually aware are often determined to be about those objects by virtue of some special causal relation. So again, perhaps such a causal relation could provide one way (among others) of thinking about objects of which the thinker is neither directly nor perceptually aware.” (ms1, p8).

In what follows, I shall follow McKinsey’s assumption and assume that we are dealing with thoughts about unsighted objects.

However, if this is McKinsey’s view, we have a *prima facie* problem. Doesn’t Kripke’s Gödel-Schmidt case tell us that that a subject’s use of many proper names can succeed in referring to an object even when the object being referred to satisfies none of the descriptions in the public language commonly associated with it? The answer to this

problem is that the subject must use a *non-common private and internal first-personal description* to refer to the object and not a common description in the public language.

In order to illustrate this point it is important to distinguish between two interpretations of Kripke's Gödel-Schmidt case. There is the minimal interpretation (which I outlined in Chapter 1 and shall call the *minimal interpretation*) but there is also a more ambitious and far reaching interpretation of the case too (what I shall call the *extended interpretation*).

The *minimal interpretation* claims this: Practically the only thing many people have heard about the logician Kurt Gödel is that he discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic. But people's uses of the name 'Gödel' would still refer to Gödel even if it had not been Gödel but an unknown Viennese high school teacher named 'Schmidt' who actually discovered incompleteness. Since a similar point can be made regarding all the other achievements for which Gödel is famous, it is clear that the referent of the name 'Gödel' is not determined by any description, like 'the discoverer of incompleteness', that might be *commonly associated* with the name. But then surely, the name 'Gödel' has no descriptive meaning in any public language since if it did, there would be a commonly associated description that determines its referent. Thus, the referent of the name 'Gödel' is completely exhausted by the contingently existing man - Gödel. Thus, the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that Gödel is cute' is logically wide in the sense that it logically implies the existence of a contingently existing physical object distinct from the thinker - Laura – the object in question is the contingently existing man Gödel.

The *extended interpretation*, on the other hand, claims what the *minimal interpretation* does and also claims that *there is no description whatsoever* that succeeds in uniquely picking out the contingently existing man Gödel. What might motivate the extended interpretation is the assumption of *CPA*. Given the assumption of *CPA*, then the logically wide property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate such as 'S thinks that Gödel is cute' will also be an individuating property.

There are arguments against the extended interpretation. These arguments suggest that in the Gödel-Schmidt case a speaker or thinker could have some non-common private and internal description which succeeds in uniquely picking out Gödel. For example, a speaker might use the following private and internal description to pick out Gödel:

**The man to whom I've heard others refer to as 'Gödel'.**

Note that the use of the term 'I' in the property **man to whom I've heard others refer to as 'Gödel'** makes the description private and internal to the speaker or thinker who uses that description. Note that the description in question is not using a description that is solely constructed out of terms in the public language.

Corresponding to this private and internal description one can construct a logically narrow mental anaphoric property like this:

**(MA5) S assumes that there is exactly one man to whom he, himself, has heard others refer to as 'Gödel' and S thinks that *he* (that very man) is cute.**

**(MA5)** is logically narrow in that it does not logically imply the existence of ordinary contingently existing physical objects. However, provided that the first personal descriptive assumption uniquely picks out Gödel, S will succeed in having a thought that is of or about Gödel.

More generally, McKinsey defends the following model of a speaker having thoughts that are of or about objects:

"Necessarily, for any person  $x$ , object  $y$ , and property  $G$ , if there is a property  $F$  such that (i)  $y = \text{the } F$ , and (ii)  $x$  assumes that there is just one  $F$ , and  $x$  *cs* that it (that very  $F$ ) is  $G$ , then  $x$  *cs* of or about  $y$  that  $y$  is  $G$ ." (ms1, p13).

## §4 Descriptive names and error

McKinsey allows that there are examples of descriptive names in real language which do not contain an objectual element. Cognitive predicates involving such terms, typically, express logically narrow mental anaphoric properties which individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe.

For example, consider the cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that Jack the Ripper is cute' where the name 'Jack the Ripper' is functioning as a descriptive name and may not have a

referent. Here 'Jack the Ripper' may have the following descriptive meaning in the public language:

(DfJTR)  $x$  is Jack the Ripper iff  $x$  is the murderer of several prostitutes in 1890's London

Corresponding to the above descriptive linguistic meaning we can say the following mental anaphoric property is expressed by the cognitive predicate 'Laura thinks that Jack the ripper is cute':

**(MAJTR) Laura assumes that exactly one man is the murderer of several prostitutes in 1890's London and Laura thinks that *he* (that very man) is cute.**

This property is logically narrow and individuates Laura's thought. Note, however, that since 'Jack the Ripper' may have no referent, then its occurrence in simple non-cognitive sentences such as 'Jack the Ripper is a murderer' may result in those sentences expressing no proposition. However, in cognitive predicates the referent, if any, of 'Jack the ripper' drops out as irrelevant and the term contributes only its descriptive linguistic meaning to what is said by the predicate; and the predicate, thus, expresses a mental anaphoric property corresponding to this descriptive meaning.

Consider a situation like "Dry-Earth" which is identical to Earth except that a subject,  $S$ , and his speech community all have a mass perceptual illusion of a substance which has the macroscopic properties of water when there is in fact no such substance. In such a situation a simple non-cognitive sentence such as 'water is wet' expresses no proposition because water is a genuine term with no referent. However, in the cognitive predicate ' $S$  thinks that water is wet' the referent, if any, of 'water' drops out as irrelevant to what is said and 'water' contributes its objectual linguistic meaning. Corresponding to that objectual linguistic meaning, the predicate expresses a (logically wide) and *non-individuating* cognitive property such as:

**(MA3'')  $S$  assumes that there is just one kind that the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Dry-Earth belongs and  $S$  thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.**

Property **(MA3'')** is semantically de re with respect to the contingently existing physical planet Dry-Earth. However,  $S$ 's mental state can still be individuated by another logically

narrow property which characterises the subject's way of thinking of the planet that features in **(MA3')**, for example:

**(MA3\*)** S assumes that there is just one planet that he inhabits and S assumes that there is just one kind that the colourless, odourless thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on *that planet* belongs and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.

Note that in (MA3\*), S will not have a cognitive attitude *towards a proposition*, since the sentence 'water is wet' expresses no proposition on Dry Earth due to the term 'water' having no propositional meaning on Dry-Earth. However, S still has a logically narrow cognitive attitude (which does not essentially involve a proposition) in these circumstances.

There are also cases where a subject might make a certain descriptive assumption which fails to pick out a single object or kind. For example, it may be that in the Gödel example in the last section, perhaps there are in fact two different men to whom others refer using the name 'Gödel'. Consequently, the first personal description in question does not pick out exactly one man but instead picks out two different men. Recall, the first personal description in question was:

The **man to whom I've heard others refer to as 'Gödel'**.

The mental anaphoric property corresponding to this was:

**(MA5)** S assumes that there is exactly one man to whom he, himself, has heard others refer to as 'Gödel' and S thinks that *he* (that very man) is cute.

Now, in such circumstances the mental anaphoric property **(MA5)** will still be true of the thinker and will still individuate the thinker's mental state but the mental state in question will not be a cognitive state that is of or about an object.

In these cases, the subject's first personal descriptive assumption is false. However, it is not false that the subject makes such an assumption and possesses a mental state consisting of a complex cognitive attitude partly composed of that first person descriptive assumption and cognitive attitude. In such cases the subject does not have a cognitive attitude *about an object* nor does the subject have a cognitive attitude *towards a proposition* but the subject,

nonetheless, has a cognitive attitude characterised by a logically narrow mental anaphoric property which individuates her mental state.

The last few cases of error also have analogues in the cases of kind terms. Suppose for example, a subject uses a first personal descriptive assumption to pick out the substance water but in fact fails to do so. For example suppose that S takes the definition of water to be:

(DFError)  $x$  is water iff  $x$  is the thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on Earth.

Now, (DFError) may end up picking out several natural and non-natural kinds such as water, alcohol, ethanol and so on. But (DFError) can still result in logically narrow properties which individuate with respect to a thinkers cognitive states. For example, given a thinker is using (DFError), she may end up possessing the following (logically narrow) mental anaphoric property:

**(MAError) S assumes that there is just one planet that he inhabits and S assumes that there is just one kind that the thirst-quenching liquid of the kind that is found on *that planet* belongs and S thinks that all stuff belonging to *that kind* is wet.**

The mental anaphoric property fails to pick out the substance water or the kind water but, nonetheless it is still a logically narrow property that individuates S's cognitive state. However, we wouldn't call S's cognitive state, in this case, *a thought that is about the substance water* or *a thought that is about the kind water*, nor would we say S has a cognitive attitude towards a proposition in such a case. But, for all that, the S is still in a mental state individuated by **(MAError)**.

## §5 Objections to the McKinsey Account

I can spot at least two prominent objections to McKinsey's account of individuating our thoughts using logically narrow mental anaphoric properties. The first objection to utilises a crude reading of Burge's 'arthritis' thought experiment. The second objection utilises a strong interpretation of the semantic evidence adduced by Kripke and Putnam regarding terms and their meanings.

A crude moral to draw from Burge's 'arthritis' thought experiment is that cognitive properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing general terms such as 'arthritis', 'sofa', 'brisket' and so on logically imply the existence of a speech and linguistic community that is external to the subject of whom the thought is attributed. For example, on this interpretation the cognitive property expressed by the predicate 'Oscar believes that arthritis is painful' logically implies the existence of a speech community of other human beings external to Oscar. Similarly, on this crude reading of the experiment, the property expressed by a de dicto structured cognitive predicate such as 'S believes that Hesperus appears in the evening' will logically imply the existence of a speech community; and this result will occur whether or not the property expresses is a mental anaphoric property. The thought continues, that since many general terms are susceptible to this interpretation of Burge's thought experiment, then there just won't be enough terms in the public language which can be used to construct mental anaphoric properties that are logically narrow.

This objection trades on a crude reading of Burge's thought experiment. Firstly, it is not clear cut that a cognitive predicate such as 'Oscar believes that arthritis is painful' is structurally de dicto (see Chapter 2 and McKinsey 1993). Secondly, even if the cognitive predicate is de dicto, the strongest moral that can be drawn from Burge's thought experiment is that it shows that the qualified cognitive predicate 'Oscar believes that arthritis is painful and Oscar has an incomplete grasp of the meaning of the word 'arthritis'' expresses a cognitive property that logically implies the existence of a speech community. Similarly, this moral applied to cases of Hesperus-thoughts shows only that a qualified cognitive predicate involving the term 'Hesperus' expresses a property that logically implies the existence of a speech community. Such a qualified cognitive predicate might be, for example, 'S thinks that Hesperus appears in the evening and S has an incomplete grasp of the meanings of the words 'water' and 'appears in the evening''.

Moreover, all we need to do to avoid these qualified cognitive predicates which express logically wide properties would be to simply qualify the de dicto structured cognitive predicates that we are considering. For example, we simply have to specify that we are working with the qualified de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that Hesperus appears in the evening and S has a complete grasp of the meanings of the words 'water' and 'appears in the evening''.

The second objection to McKinsey's account is outlined by this argument:



## *Objection II*

(OII- 1) A correct account of every general term's meaning must be given by a causal theory, according to which the term's meaning is determined by a speaker or thinkers causal relations to ordinary contingently existing physical objects. [claim]

(OII-2) All mental anaphoric properties contain at least one general term. [claim]

Therefore,

(OII-3) All mental anaphoric properties are ultimately determined by the thinker's causal relations to ordinary contingently existing physical objects [ from OII-1 and OII-2].

The thought behind the claim (OII-1) of the objection is that Putnam (1975) and Kripke's (1972) account of proper names and natural kind terms shows that the meaning of these kinds of words must be given by a causal theory of some sort. And, one can infer, from the Putnam-Kripke result that the meanings of all words are determined by a causal theory. Consequently, the meanings of all words are determined by a causal relation to ordinary contingently existing physical objects (see Devitt (1981) and Stalnaker (1984)).

However, the thought behind the claim (OII-1) is dubious. There is work that disputes the result of the Kripke-Putnam account shows that the account of proper names and natural kind terms shows that the meaning of these kinds of words must be given by a causal theory of some sort (see McKinsey 1978a, 1978b, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1991b). Moreover, even if the Putnam-Kripke showed that the correct account of proper names and natural kind terms shows that the meaning of these kinds of words must be given by a causal theory of some sort, it does not show that the meanings of *all words* must be accounted for in this way. Perhaps the objection could be patched up by making an appeal to Burge's account of general terms but I have suggested in my comments earlier in this section that such an appeal would be ineffective.

## **§6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have sketched McKinsey's picture of how a subject has cognitive attitudes that are about kinds or objects. A subject has such cognitive attitudes in virtue of certain logically narrow mental anaphoric properties individuating the subject's mental states. The logically narrow states succeed in being about public and external objects and kinds, even though they themselves are private and internal to the thinker, because they use private and internal first person descriptive assumptions to pick out these objects and kinds. I have

also sketched a picture of the kind of cognitive states a subject might possess when her private first personal descriptive assumptions fail to pick out a single object or kind.

## Chapter 10

In this chapter I want to suggest how a proper understanding of “McKinsey Reasoning” and McKinsey’s positive picture of thoughts about kind terms and objects might have an important impact on two other recent paradoxes concerning issues in epistemology and philosophy of mind.

The first problem is the so-called *Achievement Problem* for privileged access. Roughly, the problem is to account for how we can know our thoughts in a special first-personal and, broadly, non-empirical manner when those very thoughts are partly determined by ordinary contingently existing physical objects in the thinker’s external environment. I have briefly, outlined this problem in Chapter 2 and will return to it here. In brief, my response is that in order to set up the *Achievement Problem*, we must assume *CPA*. However, since *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and McKinsey’s positive picture of the cognitive attitudes suggest that we ought to give up *CPA*, we can deny one of the assumptions required to set up the problem. Moreover, using McKinsey’s positive picture of the cognitive attitudes, I show how we can have thoughts about natural kinds without those thoughts being *determined by* ordinary contingently existing physical objects or kinds. On McKinsey’s picture of the cognitive attitudes we can enjoy a very strong form of privileged access to our cognitive attitude states in the form of *PAI*.

The second paradox is one given by Kallestrup & Pritchard. They argue that one cannot endorse the conjunction of the following three claims:

(EIK) A necessary condition on S’s knowledge that p is that all epistemic factors relevant to S’s knowledge (as opposed to merely true belief) that p are reflectively accessible to S.

*Content Externalism* (CE)

The contents of an subjects’, S’s, mental states fail to supervene upon S’s intrinsic physical properties.

(K-thoughts) S can know that she thinks that p in some way or another.

My response to Kallestrup & Pritchard's argument is that it tacitly assumes but does not explicitly state *CPA*; and, since I think we have good reason to reject *CPA*, I think we can see the problem posed by Kallestrup & Pritchard which allows that (a) we can have strong a priori knowledge of our mental states that are about ordinary contingent objects and kinds, (b) retain externalism in the form of *SE* about de dicto structured cognitive predicates and still hold onto (K-thoughts) and perhaps (EIK) at least for some of our knowledge.

## §1 The Achievement Problem

A number of commentators on “McKinsey Reasoning” also sometimes comment on a separate argument which they call the Achievement Problem. A rough outline of the problem looks like this:

### *Achievement Reasoning Template*

(ART1) If S can know a priori that she is thinking that p, then S can distinguish a priori between the actual situation in which she thinks that p and a *relevant alternative situation* in which she lacks the thought that p [claim]

(ART2) There are situations in which S lacks the thought that p which S cannot a priori distinguish from the actual situation in which she possesses the thought [claim].

(ART3) At least some of the situations in which in which S lacks the thought that p which S cannot a priori distinguish from the actual situation in which she possesses the thought are relevant alternative situations to the actual situation [claim]

Therefore,

(ART4) S cannot know a priori that she thinks that p [from ART1, ART2 and ART3].

The term “a priori” in scare quotes is to be clarified in a moment.

### §1.1 Common views on the relationship between the Achievement Problem and McKinsey Reasoning

Some commentators, typically, see the *Achievement Problem* as being fundamentally more important than what they take to be “McKinsey Reasoning”. Specifically, they think that a requirement on being able to correctly cite “McKinsey Reasoning” requires the Achievement Problem to be solved in a certain way (see for example Sawyer 1998, 1999; Brown 2004; Davies 2000, 1998). Specifically, they think that if the *Achievement Reasoning*

*Template* is sound, then no subject can know the contents of her thoughts in an “a priori” manner. But, then, continues the thought, we do not have one of the required premises to set up “McKinsey Reasoning”. They think that the *Achievement Reasoning Template*, if sound, will have shown that the following claim is false whatever the interpretation of “a priori”:

S can know “a priori” that she thinks that p

And, they also think that a claim like S can know “a priori” that she thinks that p will be required to set up “McKinsey Reasoning”.

In order to make sense of these commentators views they must take “McKinsey Reasoning” to be something like the *B-B Reasoning*.

Clearly, the thesis *W-PAC* of that reasoning requires that a subject can know “a priori” (weakly a priori, in fact) that she thinks a certain thought. However, if the *Achievement Problem Argument* is sound, then the claim that a subject can know “a priori” that she thinks a certain thought will always be false and the *B-B Reasoning* can never get started.

Now, if these commentators are correct, then in order for the *B-B Reasoning* to present us with a genuine problem where the claim that a subject can know “a priori” that she thinks a certain thought has at least has some plausibility and is not obviously false, we need to show how the *Achievement Reasoning Template* is unsound in such a way that does not render the claims of the *B-B Argument* false or implausible. The road these commentators tend to go down to achieve this result is to endorse what I shall call *epistemic solutions* to the Achievement Problem (see Flavey & Owens (1994); Farkas (2008)). An *epistemic solution* to the problem, in effect, disputes the requirements on “a priori” knowledge of thought used to set up the problem. In effect it denies the claim AR1.

So, to summarise, we have two commonly held views about the Achievement Problem:

#### *View 1*

The Achievement Problem is “prior to” or “more basic” than “McKinsey Reasoning” in the sense that a certain solution for the Achievement Problem is required in order for “McKinsey Reasoning” to be plausible.

### *View 2*

The Achievement Problem requires an *epistemic solution* in order for “McKinsey Reasoning” to have some plausibility.

I shall challenge *View 1*. In fact, I shall argue that “McKinsey Reasoning” is in fact more fundamental than the Achievement Problem or prior to the Achievement Problem. I shall argue for this claim by showing how the rejection of *CPA* and the positive picture of the cognitive attitudes developed by McKinsey resolves the Achievement Problem Argument by denying its (ART2).

I deny the (ART2) because while I agree that many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide, my rejection of *CPA* does not force me to claim that these properties individuate mental states. Thus, I am not forced to claim such mental states are logically wide. Instead, using McKinsey’s positive picture of the cognitive attitudes, I shall show how one can have (logically narrow) thoughts about natural kinds like water without those thoughts being determined by ordinary contingently existing physical objects or kinds.

## **§1.1 My response to the Achievement Problem Argument**

Firstly, we need to look at the various scenarios that are sometimes used to generate the Achievement Problem. These scenarios usually involve us imagining distant planets in the actual world which are identical to planet Earth except for the fact that water does not exist on these planets. Rather, on one of these planets, Twin-Earth, a substance called XYZ exists which has macroscopic properties that are indistinguishable from water and is found in all the lakes and rivers of Twin Earth. However, substance XYZ has an entirely different chemical structure to water, while water has the chemical structure H<sub>2</sub>O, substance XYZ is composed of the chemicals XYZ. The Achievement problem asks us to imagine a subject who, is unwittingly transported between the two worlds.

Now we have a dilemma about how to interpret the term “a priori” in the Achievement Problem Argument Premises. Some commentators have weak a priori knowledge in mind, which allows that a subject can make empirical assumptions in coming to know that she thinks that p even though her acquisition of that knowledge did not use perceptual observation or empirical investigation.

But if weak a priori knowledge allows a subject to make empirical assumptions, then why can't that subject just make the (empirical) assumption that she is not being switched between Earth and Twin-Earth? It might be replied that, even given this use of "weak a priori" a subject still requires adequate a priori discriminative abilities so that she could tell whether or not she was on Earth or Dry-Earth, and this is what claim (ART1) of the *Achievement Reasoning Template* is demanding. On the other hand, the sense of "a priori" used by the *Achievement Reasoning Template* might be a strong sense of a priori resulting in its not being possible to make any empirical assumptions in her acquisition of her knowledge that she is thinking that p.

However, I think that other details of the travelling case story need to be unpicked; and once they are unpicked they will clearly show that *CPA* has been used.

If one is claiming that one thinks that water is wet on Earth but, after spending a sufficient time on Dry Earth, thinks that twater is wet, then one is claiming that certain logically wide properties are individuating. For example, one is claiming that the logically wide property **S thinks that water is wet** is individuating.

Now since the Achievement Problem tacitly uses *CPA*, then it cannot be a more fundamental argument than "McKinsey Reasoning" if we interpret "McKinsey Reasoning" as *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. This is because *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* challenges the view that one can assume the conjunction of *PAI*, *SE* and *CPA*. Moreover, given that I have argued that *CPA* and *SE* are plausible, given *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, we are forced to give up *CPA*. So I would suggest that in order to get the Achievement Problem started by moving from the claim that properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates containing kind terms are logically wide to the claim that such properties individuate with respect to the cognitive state described, one must assume *CPA*. But if one is going to assume *CPA*, then it must be explained, why in the face of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* and the support for *PAI* and *SE*, such an assumption is legitimate. As far as I can see, no commentators or proponents of the Achievement Problem have ever done this.

Cast your mind back to *View 1*. It said:

### *View 1*

The Achievement Problem is “prior to” or “more basic” than “McKinsey Reasoning” in the sense that a certain solution for the Achievement Problem is required in order for “McKinsey Reasoning” to be plausible.

I have challenged *View 1* by interpreting “McKinsey Reasoning” as *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. However, were we to interpret “McKinsey Reasoning” as B-B Reasoning, then the claim may have some plausibility. This is because *B-B Reasoning* itself tacitly assumes *CPA*. With *CPA* tacitly assumed and never questioned, it may well be that one needs to resolve the Achievement Problem in a certain way before one can even get the B-B Reasoning started.

Also recall View 2. It said:

### *View 2*

The Achievement Problem requires an *epistemic solution* in order for “McKinsey Reasoning” to have some plausibility.

As I reject the claim *CPA* in the *Achievement Problem Argument*, I do not also need to challenge the other premise ART1. One does not *need* to challenge the epistemic claim ART1 *in order to avoid the Achievement Problem*. However, given I also endorse a strong thesis about the a priori knowability of the properties that individuate mental states in the form of *PAI*, it may well indirectly commit me claiming ART1 anyway.

## §2 Kallestrup & Pritchard Paradox

Kallestrup and Pritchard (hereafter *K&P*) claim to have devised an argument to show that the following three claims are incompatible:

(EIK) A necessary condition on S's knowledge that p is that all epistemic factors relevant to S's knowledge (as opposed to merely true belief) that p are reflectively accessible to S.

### *Content Externalism (CE)*

The contents of an subjects', S's, mental states fail to supervene upon S's intrinsic physical properties.

(K-thoughts) S can know that she thinks that p in some way or another.



They say:

“Pick your favourite example of a wide content concept. We shall use ‘water’ but any will do. Now consider an agent’s putative knowledge that she has a mental state with the content water is wet. Given [Content Externalism], if an agent has a mental state with this content, then it must be true that she is not a brain-in-a-vat who has never had any experience – either directly or indirectly – of water (a BIV\*). After all, were she a BIV\*, then she would have a thought with a different content altogether.” (2004, p350).

It is clear the “Content Externalism” that K&P have in mind is *not* what I have called Semantic *Externalism* (SE) – that is an externalism about the *properties expressed by de dicto structured cognitive predicates*. Rather, their “Content Externalism” is directed at the level of the *metaphysical nature of a subject’s mental state*. Additionally, their externalism does not seem to be too concerned about there being a *logical implication* between the property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate (or mental state) in question and ordinary contingently existing physical objects. In order to see what they do have in mind by “externalism” it is worth quoting their discussion of the topic at length:

“*Content Externalism* (CE)

The contents of an agent’s, a’s, mental states fail to supervene upon a’s intrinsic physical properties.

We take CE to be supported by the standard ‘Twin Earth’ arguments. If an agent’s mental contents did always supervene upon her intrinsic properties, then she would share mental contents with her doppelganger on twin-earth. But the Twin-Earth arguments purport to show that such internal physical duplicates might have different mental properties – i.e. that different de dicto belief ascriptions might be true of these agents. Accordingly, the issue of what mental content an agent entertains need not be solely decided by that agent’s intrinsic physical constitution.. Instead it may also depend upon which physical or social environment the agent is embedded in” (2004, p346).

I agree that some so-called “Twin-Earth arguments” may result in different de dicto ascriptions of agents that are “internally the same” in some sense and, in my view, such ascriptions will express different cognitive properties. However, I disagree that such cognitive properties individuate the cognitive state they describe. Consequently, I disagree that the metaphysical nature of the cognitive states of two agents who are “internally the same” will be different. So, what makes K&P so certain that such properties do individuate with respect to the metaphysical nature of mental states? They do not say in the paper but one explanation is that they take every de dicto cognitive predicate to express

a property which individuates the cognitive state it describes. That is to say, one explanation is that K&P assume *CPA*.

I suspect the explanation as to why the certain properties expressed by s-wide de dicto structured cognitive predicates is that the inchoate notion of S-wideness sometimes picks out de dicto structured cognitive predicates that express logically wide properties.

A quick summary of K&P's argument which does not explicitly state its commitment to *CPA* is this:

*K&P Quick Argument*

(KP1) If S knows the content of her thought is that *water is wet*, then S must not be a BIV\* [claim]

Therefore,

(KP1\*) A relevant factor to S's knowledge that she is thinking that *water is wet* is that S is not a BIV\* [from KP1].

(KP2) If S knows the content of her thought that *water is wet*, then S must be able to reflectively determine that she is not a BIV\* [claim].

But,

(KP3) It is impossible to reflectively determine that one is not a BIV\* [claim].

Therefore,

(KP4) It is impossible for S to know the content of her thought that *water is wet* [from KP1\*, KP2 and KP3].

As I understand it, the Kallestrup-Pritchard Argument works like this. Claim (KP2) is an instance of accepting the thesis (EIK) about knowledge of one's thought that water is wet. Claim (KP1) results in the "Content externalism" they endorse, they say:

"Given CE, if an agent has a mental state with this content, then it must be true that she is not a brain-in-a-vat who has never had any experience – either directly or indirectly – of water (a BIV\*). After all, were she a BIV\*, then she would have a thought with a different content altogether." (2004, p350).

Claim (KP3) results from the nature of the BIV\* hypothesis: S could not subjectively distinguish the experiences he has from the experience he would have of occurrently thinking the thought that water is wet.

Expressed with the assumption of *CPA* explicitly stated K&P's argument looks like this:

*K&P Longer Argument*

(KP0) The property expressed by the de dicto structured cognitive predicate 'S thinks that water is wet' expresses the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet** and (a) this property individuates with respect to the cognitive state it describes and (b) this property is both logically wide and s-wide [claim]

(KP1) If S knows that she possesses a mental state  $\mathbb{M}$  individuated by the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet**, then S must not be a BIV\* [from KP0]

Therefore,

(KP1\*) A relevant factor to S's S knows that she possesses a mental state  $\mathbb{M}$  individuated by the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet** is that S is not a BIV\* [from KP1].

(KP2) If S knows that she possesses a mental state  $\mathbb{M}$  individuated by the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet**, then S must be able to reflectively determine that she is not a BIV\* [claim].

But,

(KP3) It is impossible to reflectively determine that one is not a BIV\* [claim].

Therefore,

(KP4) It is impossible for S to know that she possesses a mental state  $\mathbb{M}$  individuated by the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet** [from KP1\*, KP2 and KP3].

*K&P Longer Argument* emphasises the role that *CPA* and logical wideness plays in the derivation of claim (KP1). Specifically, being a BIV\* is a relevant factor to S's knowledge that she possesses a mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking the proposition that water is wet** precisely because this property is logically wide and individuating. Were the property not individuating, then perhaps S would share the same (logically) narrow mental states when she is on planet Earth and her thought happens to pick out water and when she is a BIV\* and her thought picks out no object or substance. Similarly, were the property not logically wide but individuating, then perhaps it would be logically narrow and the mental states it individuates would be the same whether S inhabits Earth or whether S is a BIV\*.

What this result shows is that the K&P argument really shows is that the claims (i) Epistemological Internalism (EIK), (ii) *CPA*, (iii) the logical wideness of the properties expressed by certain de dicto structured cognitive predicates (such as those containing the kind term 'water') and (iv) knowledge of the properties that individuate our mental states are jointly incompatible.

Here, *CPA* is on our list of suspects and, with the weight of evidence I have presented against *CPA* in this thesis, I'd suggest that it is the sole culprit responsible for the problem that K&P raise.

# Conclusion

In Chapter 1 I have considered the following three claims:

## *Privileged Access to Individuating Factors (PAI)*

For any subject,  $S$ , if  $S$  possesses a given mental state  $\mathbb{M}$ , which is individuated by property  $F$ ,  $S$  can know strongly a priori that she possesses  $F$ .

## *Semantic Externalism (SE)*

Many de dicto structured cognitive predicates express properties that are logically wide (in the sense of logically implying the existence of contingently existing physical objects external to the thinker).

## *Cognitive Predicate Assumption (CPA)*

Every de dicto structured cognitive predicate expresses a property that individuates with respect to the mental state it describes.

Each claim has enjoyed some support in the history of philosophy. The Cartesian predicament supports *PAI*. Semantic evidence adduced by Kripke, Kaplan and perhaps others supports *SE*. Frege (1892) and Russell's (1912) work may have made *CPA* an entrenched assumption.

In Chapter 1, I presented a form of argument, which I have called *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, which aims to show that the conjunction of these three claims results in a contradiction. *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* also uses instances of the following two auxiliary claims:

## *Closure of the capacity for strong a priori knowledge across meta-logical implication (CA)*

For any subject  $S$  and any propositions  $p$  and  $q$ : If  $S$  can know a priori that  $p$  and the proposition that  $p$  logically implies the proposition that  $q$ , then  $S$  can know a priori that  $q$ .

## *Environmental Access*

For any subject,  $S$ , and any proposition that  $e$ , where  $e$  asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from  $S$ ,  $S$  cannot know strongly a priori that  $e$ .

I have defended those auxiliary claims in Chapters 4 and 5. I, thus, conclude that *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* has shown that the conjunction of *CPA*, *SE* and *PAI* results in an absurd conclusion.

Moreover, I have suggested that both *PAI* and *SE* are plausible and have defended them from objections in Chapters 6 and 7. In Chapter 8, I have suggested that *CPA* is false. Given the falsity of *CPA*, some cognitive predicates express properties that do individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe, whereas other express properties that do not individuate. The view I suggest in Chapter 8 is the properties that do individuate with respect to the cognitive state they describe are logically narrow properties. However, this leaves me with a problem: How can private and internal mental states individuated by logically narrow properties be about ordinary contingently existing physical objects and kinds? In Chapter 9, I addressed this issue by endorsing McKinsey's view of the cognitive attitudes which uses an analogue of the semantic phenomenon of reference fixing by description. In Chapter 10, I then showed how a rejection of *CPA* together with McKinsey's view of the cognitive attitudes resists the so-called Achievement Problem and could shed interesting new light on a recent paradox by Kallestrup & Pritchard.

A second theme running throughout the thesis has been that there has been another form of reasoning that is not *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning* but has often been labelled "McKinsey Reasoning". I have called this form of reasoning *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* and have outlined this form of reasoning in Chapter 3. I have suggested that *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* seems to be concerned with showing that the conjunction of the following claims, or something similar to them, are incompatible:

#### *W-PAC*

For any subject, *S*, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p**: If *S* is thinking that *p*, then *S* can know weakly a priori that she thinks that *p*.

#### *S-Wide externalism*

In many cases, if a subject, *S*, possesses a thought that *p*, then *S*'s thought that *p* fails to weakly supervene upon the subject's internal physical state.

#### *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances*

For any subject, *S*, and any mental state individuated by the property **S is thinking that p** or **S thinks that p** and such properties fail to weakly supervene upon a subject's internal physical

state, and any proposition that  $e$  which asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects:  $S$  can know “a priori” that if she thinks that  $p$  then  $e$ .

*Ambitious Environmental Access*

For any subject,  $S$ , and any proposition that  $e$ , where  $e$  asserts the existence of contingently existing ordinary physical objects logically distinct from  $S$ ,  $S$  cannot know weakly a priori that  $e$ .

*A priori deduction principle*

{If  $S$  can know weakly a priori that  $p$  and  $S$  can know a priori that (if  $p$ , then  $q$ ) and  $S$  can simultaneously believe both that  $p$  and that (if  $p$ , then  $q$ ) and  $S$  can competently deduce  $q$  from this simultaneous belief}, then  $S$  can know weakly a priori that  $q$ .

The basic idea of the Boghossian-Brown Reasoning seemed to be to argue that the claims *A priori deduction principle*, *Ambitious Environmental Access*, *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* are all plausible, thus, leaving the culprits for the incompatibility  $S$ -wideness and  $W$ - $PAC$ .

In Chapter 4, I suggested that the considerations both for and against the *Ambitious Environmental Access* thesis are inconclusive. In Chapter 5, I suggested that the case against claim *A priori deduction principle* is not completely conclusive.

In Chapter 6, I suggested that the common explanations for  $W$ - $PAC$ , tend to assume the  $CPA$  thesis; but since there are considerations against  $CPA$ , in my view, such explanations are inadequate. Moreover, in Chapter 6, I also queried the philosophical basis for  $W$ - $PAC$ : I suggested that such support cannot be from the Cartesian predicament because the notion of aprioricity that  $W$ - $PAC$  is concerned with is simply too weak to capture that predicament.

In Chapters 3 and 7, I suggested that interpreting the implication in the *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* thesis as something weaker than logical fails to capture the position of a semantic externalist  $SE$  and is, in fact, consistent with the denial of  $SE$ . However, if one is denying  $SE$ , one has to explain away the array of semantic evidence in  $SE$ 's favour and, so far as I can see, no commentator on the *B-B Reasoning* has attempted to do that. Moreover, in Chapter 7, I suggested that the case for the “a priori” knowability of *A priori knowability of S-Wideness Instances* thesis was flawed, given the semantics of many terms.

I would, thus, suggest that the various shortcomings of the claims that are the concern of the *B-B Reasoning* stem from an inability to have grasped the philosophical basis of the claims that are the concern of *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. Once again, the philosophical basis of the problem is the Cartesian predicament supports *PAI*, semantic evidence from Kripke (1972) and Kaplan (1979) supports *SE* and the work of Frege (1892) and Russell (1912) supports *CPA*. In particular, I'd suggest that the *B-B Reasoning's* commentators tacit assumption, rather than explicit recognition, of *CPA* has provoked these shortcomings.

What I have done is to put the ball back in the court of the commentators and proponents of the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning*. I have said to them:

“Look the problem you are considering seems to tacitly, rather than explicitly assume *CPA*. A proper and thorough investigation of McKinsey's work, together with some small emendations and presentational changes made by me, provides persuasive considerations against *CPA*. So in light of this what are you going to do?”

The commentators on the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* still have many options in responding. For example, perhaps, they'll attack McKinsey's positive picture of cognitive attitude states only being individuated by logically narrow properties which I have endorsed. Or, for example, perhaps they'll suggest that the McKinsey case for the claim that some words in our language have descriptive linguistic meanings isn't strong enough. But even if these attacks on the positive McKinsey picture are successful, these commentators still have McKinsey's negative case against *CPA* to contend with. That negative case against *CPA* is given by *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*, it says that the conjunction of *CPA*, *SE* and *PAI* is untenable but there are persuasive considerations in favour of the latter two theses, so we must reject the former thesis. I believe I have done enough in this thesis to defend *Traditional McKinsey Reasoning*. However, whichever route the commentators on the *Boghossian-Brown Reasoning* choose, it is going to take them into the realms of some very different literature and very different arguments compared to the reasoning that they are currently commentating upon.

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